

The State and the Community of God: Political Motifs in Romans and the Occasion for Romans 13:1-7

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Thesis Declaration

I, Edward E. M. Mackenzie, declare that this thesis is my own work and that I have not submitted this material for any other degree or qualification,

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Abstract

Scholars have frequently debated the occasion for Romans 13:1-7, examining historical, theological, and exegetical reasons for Paul's seemingly quietist stance in this passage. The political contexts of the text in question, however, have not been taken adequately into account. Both at the literary and historical level, political dimensions provided the occasion for Romans 13:1-7. Paul's discussion in Romans of judgment and sin, Christ as redeemer, and the community of Christ are framed within the discourse of apocalyptic eschatology, an ideology which critiqued the state by its disjunctive eschatology and radical negation of the present. The recipients of Paul's letter were also located in Rome, the social and symbolic centre of Roman imperial ideology. These literary and historical contexts created a tension between the claims of the gospel and those of Roman imperial ideology. In Romans 13:1-7, Paul responded to this tension, preserving a space for obeying governing authorities in the lives of Christian communities, a space threatened by his own 'political' theology. In the context of his call for obedience, however, Paul encouraged the creation and preservation of a community of God distinct from the world, a community that lived in tension with the present and in hope for the future.

Abbreviations

AGRL	Aspects of Greek and Roman Life
AH	Art History
<i>ANRW</i>	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang in der römischen Welt</i>
BDAG	W. Bauer, W.F. Arndt, F.W. Gingrich, and F. W. Danker, <i>Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament</i> , 3 rd Edition
<i>BJRL</i>	<i>Bulletin of the John Rylands Library</i>
<i>BTB</i>	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
BZNW	Beihefte Zur ZNW
CBC	Cambridge Bible Commentary
CBET	Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CBQMS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly - Monograph Series
CCS	Cambridge Classical Studies
CRINT	Compendia rerum iudaicarum ad novum testamentum,
<i>DPL</i>	<i>Dictionary of Paul and His Letters</i>
ESEC	Emory Studies in Early Christianity
EKK	Evangelisch-katholischer Kommentar
<i>ExA</i>	<i>Ex Auditu</i>
<i>ExpTim</i>	<i>Expository Times</i>
<i>HBT</i>	<i>Horizons in Biblical Theology</i>
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
HTS	Harvard Theological Studies
ICC	International Critical Commentary
<i>IDBSup</i>	<i>Supplementary Volume to Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible</i>
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>

<i>JES</i>	<i>Journal of Ecumenical Studies</i>
<i>JHC</i>	<i>Journal of Higher Criticism</i>
<i>JRE</i>	<i>Journal of Religious Ethics</i>
<i>JRomS</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
<i>JSJ</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism</i>
<i>JSJSup</i>	Journal for the Study of Judaism – Supplement Series
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
<i>JSNTSup</i>	Journal for the Study of the New Testament – Supplement Series
<i>JSP</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha</i>
<i>JSPSup</i>	Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha - Supplement Series
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
<i>LCL</i>	Loeb Classical Library
<i>LW</i>	<i>Lutheran World</i>
<i>MTh</i>	<i>Modern Theology</i>
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
<i>NovTSup</i>	Novum Testamentum, Supplements
<i>NVBS</i>	New Voices in Biblical Studies
<i>OTL</i>	Old Testament Library
<i>PHSRS</i>	Prentice-Hall Studies in Religion Series
<i>PMAAR</i>	Papers and Monographs of the American Academy in Rome
<i>PMAPA</i>	Philological Monographs Published by the American Philological Association
<i>RLC</i>	Roman Literature and its Contexts
<i>SBLDS</i>	SBL Dissertation Series
<i>SBT</i>	Studies in Biblical Theology
<i>SD</i>	Studies and Documents
<i>SFSHJ</i>	South Florida Studies in the History of Judaism

SIHC	Studies in the Intercultural History of Christianity
SJLA	Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity
<i>SJRS</i>	<i>Scottish Journal of Religious Studies</i>
SNTSMS	Society for the New Testament Monograph Series
SNTW	Studies of the New Testament and Its World
<i>ST</i>	<i>Studia theologica</i>
SVTP	Studia in Veteris Testamenti pseudepigrapha
NovTSup	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
<i>TDNT</i>	G.Kittel and G. Friedrich ed., <i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament and Early Christianity</i>
<i>TS</i>	<i>Theological Studies</i>
WBC	Word Bible Commentaries
VTSup	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
<i>ZNW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
<i>ZTK</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>

Abbreviations of biblical books, Jewish literature, and early Christian works are consistent with those in JBL 107/3 (1988), 579-596. Abbreviations of classical works not found in JBL are taken from the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 3rd edition (Oxford University Press, 1996).

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

‘Chapter 13:1-7 of Paul’s Letter to the Romans became perhaps the most influential part of the New Testament on the level of world history. This happened in spite of the fact that the interpretation of the passage has never been easy and is nowadays more disputed than ever before.’¹

Despite the wealth of studies, commentaries, monographs and theses (!) which deal with Romans 13:1-7, controversy continues to surround these seven verses buried in the final paraentic chapters of Paul’s letter to the Romans. The modern interest in this passage has, not unnaturally, arisen from its use and abuse in the history of the church. Paul’s words in Romans 13 have been used to justify every sort of oppression and misgovernment.² Luther classically appealed to this text in seeking to persuade the Anabaptist peasants to submit to their masters and accept their servile status as from God. Previously, medieval theology relied on the text for justifying the division of worldly authority into two spheres; temporal and spiritual. Although there was a relationship between the spheres, it was clear that obedience to the temporal rulers was expected. In more recent years, the text played a role in the notorious inactivity of many of the churches living under the Third Reich. The Lutheran separation of church and state blunted much of the potential resistance to what the Barmen declaration rejected as a rival Word. The work of South African scholars on this text testifies to the role it has also played in the shameful history of Apartheid.

Those who have tackled the historical and theological use and misuse of the text have turned to historical exegesis to ascertain the meaning of the text within its first century context. In so doing, scholars have attempted to limit, qualify, or even overturn the traditional ‘meaning’ of the passage which legitimised the ‘powers that be’ as authorised by God to rule. The modern disenchantment with authority structures has sought some sort of justification from the historical study of ancient biblical texts.

¹ Ernst Bammel, “Romans 13,” in *Jesus and the Politics of His Day*, ed. Ernst Bammel and C. F. D. Moule, 365-384 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 365.

² The following examples will be discussed in more detail below.

It would be unfair, however, to assume that hermeneutics alone has driven research into Romans 13:1-7. There are also some very real problems in understanding the role that the text played in Paul's own thought, such that some even argue that it is a later interpolation. Barnikol's detailed and broad argument for this position relies on more than the assertion of inconsistency between this text and others within the Pauline corpus, but the claim that it does not fit with what we know of Paul was the central foundation of his argument.³ Could the Paul who announced the imminent destruction of all earthly institutions be the same Paul who called for subordination to these very institutions?⁴ Could Paul have accepted the authority of a rule that had been responsible for the death of his Lord, and which would be responsible for even his own death? Barnikol's own investigation leads him to date the text in the late second century, arguing that it was composed in a church ruled by monarchical bishops and prepared the church for its eventual Constantinian take-over. Although others have also argued that the text is an interpolation,⁵ the majority of scholars remain unconvinced by this theory. To begin with, there is no convincing textual evidence to suggest that Romans 13:1-7 was absent from Romans, and much of the vocabulary of the passage is distinctively Pauline.⁶ It is better to begin by assuming the authenticity of the passage, and attempt to understand it within its context, rather than relegating it to a hypothetically derived later date. For those who accept that the text is Pauline, however, Barnikol's questions raise the issue of how this text relates to other Pauline passages.

Although a number of questions can be asked about Romans 13:1-7, two in particular have taxed exegetes. Firstly, granted that Paul wrote the text, *what* exactly did he mean by it? Who are the 'ruling authorities' that appear in v.1? Why did Paul choose

³ Ernst Barnikol, "Römer 13: Der nichtpaulinische Ursprung der absoluten Obrigkeitsbejahung von Römer 13, 1-7," in *Studien Zum Neuen Testament Und Zur Patristik: Zum 90 Geburtstag Erich Klostermann*, ed. Friedrich Zucker et al. (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1961), 65-133.

⁴ Paul's eschatological belief implied the destruction of authorities, cf. 1 Cor 2:6 (although here the reference may be to spiritual powers); 15:25; 1 Thess 1:10; 5:3.

⁵ J. C. O'Neill, *Paul's Letter to the Romans* (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1975), 207-209; James Kallas, "Romans XIII. 1-7: An Interpolation," *NTS* 11 (1964-65): 365-74.

⁶ 'Der Text enthält also eine sehr große Zahl von Ausdrücken, die Paulus auch sonst in seinen Briefen gebraucht. V.5 weist sogar kein einziges unpaulinisches Wort auf!' Johannes Friedrich, Wolfgang Pöhlmann, and Peter Stuhlmacher, "Zur historischen Situation und Intention von Rom 13, 1-7," *ZTK* 73 (1976), 148.

to describe them as apparent recipients of God's sovereign authority? Why is there no mention of Christ in this text?⁷ What is the relationship between this text and its immediate context, such that Christians are called to renounce vengeance (12:19) but 'rulers' are authorised to exercise it (13:4)? Is the 'debt' the readers owe love (13:8) or taxes (13:7)?

The second central question is *why* Paul wrote Romans 13:1-7? Why is there no other case of Paul calling for Christians to submit to rulers elsewhere? Was it because he had not yet been to Rome, or was there a specific issue he felt he needed to address? If the issue was specific, did it relate to Rome itself or to his experiences in Corinth or elsewhere? Was the issue theological in nature or related to the social experiences of early Christians?⁸

Most scholars recognise that there is a connection between the answers to these two questions, but there is often too much weight given to one or the other. Thus, those who focus on explaining the possible historical situation which led Paul to write often fail to integrate the text into Paul's theology, whereas others believe that the text can be studied without describing the specific conditions which led Paul to write Romans 13.

This introductory chapter suggests a new approach to the context of Romans 13:1-7, one which focuses on political aspects of Paul's gospel and of Roman imperial ideology as a background to this text. This understanding of the context is compared to previous discussions of Romans 13, both in relationship to church discourse on the state and to more recent exegetical work. Although a variety of contexts have been proposed for the text (Jewish nationalism, unrest over taxes etc.), proposals which have suggested a broad apologetic motif for Romans 13:1-7 have failed to explain in any detail why this apologetic was necessary. This thesis argues that Paul's inheritance of apocalyptic eschatology lent his theology in Romans a political

⁷ 'It is remarkable that Paul can discuss this topic in the absence of any christological consideration.' Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 663.

⁸ Another important question concerns the source of Paul's teaching. Friedrich, Pöhlmann and Stuhlmacher have discussed this issue at length and conclude that a number of sources underlie this text; Paul draws on the Jewish scriptures, but also on specific administrative language. Johannes Friedrich, "Zur historischen Situation," 134-146.

weight, and so conflicted with Roman imperial ideology, making it necessary for Paul to address explicitly the relationship of Christians to governing authorities. This proposal is also congruent with recent developments in Pauline studies stressing Paul as a political thinker. Further, we shall argue that although Romans addressed a specific situation in Rome (gentile Christian arrogance towards Jewish Christians), this occasion allowed Paul to develop a gospel vision which traversed political as well as religious boundaries.

Methodology and Argument: Establishing the Context

The historical and literary contexts of Romans 13:1-7 included political dimensions which led Paul to address the question of what attitudes those in the church should have towards those who rule. The *literary* context of Romans 13:1-7 embraces Paul's apocalyptic eschatology, a political as well as a religious ideology, while the *historical* context of the letter includes the location of its recipients in Rome, the centre of Roman imperial ideology in which religious claims were fused with political reality.⁹ Romans 13:1-7 is not a surprising intrusion into a solely 'theological' document, but an attempt by Paul to address real concerns created by the flow of the letter and by the location of its recipients. The purpose of Romans 13:1-7, in light of these contexts, was to create a space for obedience to the governing authorities.

The literary context of Romans 13:1-7 includes an apocalyptic framework for Paul's ethical instructions in chaps. 12-13. The head to the ethical section, Romans 12:1-2, clearly relates the ethical material to Paul's eschatological perspective, calling on believers to avoid conformity to 'this age' and instead to be transformed in 'newness of mind'. Shortly following Romans 13:1-7, Paul refers to the imminent end of this age as an impetus for present Christ-like behaviour (13:11-14). The apocalyptic material within these chapters does not stand alone. Throughout Romans, Paul draws on apocalyptic eschatology in articulating his understanding of the Gospel (Rom 1:18-30; 5:12-21; 8:1-25).¹⁰ The vision of reality expressed in apocalyptic eschatology challenged the political status quo. More than a simple 'religious' world-

⁹ These two contexts receive specific attention in chap. two of this thesis.

¹⁰ The definition and support for this will be discussed in chap. two and throughout the thesis.

view, apocalyptic eschatology engendered hostility to the rulers of the world because it encouraged the faithful to look beyond the horizons of the present world order for God's imminent deliverance and eternal rule.¹¹ The scope of Paul's eschatological world-view includes the whole world and, by extension, its political, social, and material aspects. Paul's use of apocalyptic material retained its political implications and so required him to instruct believers to obey the governing authorities. Paul's call for subordination in Romans 13:1-7 existed in delicate but creative tension with the apocalyptic framework through which he interprets the Christ event.

The historical context of Paul's letter to the Romans cannot be separated from the location of its recipients in Rome. Scholars typically, and rightly, draw attention to the relationship between Jewish and gentile Christians in Rome as part of the historical context for reading this letter.¹² A number of interpreters have also noted the importance of Claudius' expulsion of Jews from Rome and their subsequent return under Nero.¹³ If Jewish Christians were among those expelled by Claudius, which seems likely, then their return to Rome would cause problems for the gentile Christians who had remained. The problems caused by the reintegration of these returning Jewish Christians form a likely background for Romans 14-15 and, indeed, for the letter as a whole. The tax protests in Rome under Nero have also been cited as a more specific background for Romans 13:1-7,¹⁴ a perspective which will be discussed in more detail below. The significance of the Roman address, however, is broader than these issues. Rome was the political and religious centre of the Empire;

¹¹ E.g., Dan 7:23-27; 1 Enoch 90:28-36; 2 Baruch 44:11-14. Chap. 2 argues in detail that apocalyptic eschatology was a political as well as a religious ideology.

¹² Wolfgang Wiefel, "The Jewish Community in Ancient Rome and the Origins of Roman Christianity," in *The Romans Debate, Revised and Expanded Edition*, ed. Karl P. Donfried (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991), 85-101; William S. Campbell, "Why Did Paul Write Romans?," in *Paul's Gospel in an Intercultural Context: Jew and Gentile in the Letter to the Romans*, SIHC, 14-24 (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1991), 21-22; William Lane, "Social Perspectives on Roman Christianity during the Formative Years from Nero to Nerva: Romans, Hebrews, 1 Clement," in *Judaism and Christianity in First Century Rome*, ed. Karl P. Donfried and Peter Richardson (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), 196-224.

¹³ Wiefel, "Jewish Community", 92-96; James S. Jeffers, *Conflict at Rome: Social Order and Hierarchy in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 92-96; Francis Watson, *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles: A Sociological Approach*, SNTSMS, ed. G. N. Stanton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 91-94. See chapter two for a defence of this position.

¹⁴ Friedrich, "Zur historischen Situation," 156-159.

and, in a manner which reinforced this centrality, it was also the centre of Roman imperial ideology. The architecture of the city proclaimed the supremacy of the emperor and his relationship with the gods, while Roman literature depicted the emperor in quasi-divine terms. This historical context makes it likely that political questions were present for the Roman congregation.

This thesis, then, employs a rigorous contextual approach in studying Romans 13:1-7. The political dimensions of the historical and literary contexts are taken explicitly into account. Chapter two discusses at length the grounds for holding that these two contexts were political and a central background for Romans 13:1-7.

History of Research: Content and Contexts

Any new study of Romans 13:1-7 needs to take account of how previous interpreters have viewed the text. Interpretation is always related to context – both of the interpreter and of the text, and the history of research illustrates this. The first section of this history of research examines the church context of the interpretation of Romans 13:1-7 and attempts to show how broader theological concerns of Christian communities have influenced readings of this passages and, likewise, how readings of Romans 13:1-7 have influenced theologies of state.¹⁵ The aim here is not to suggest the illegitimacy of theological concerns in exegesis, but simply to demonstrate the historical influence of this passage. The second section of this historical survey summarises some of the more modern approaches to Romans 13:1-7 and highlights the various contexts interpreters have deemed important in reading this passage. Among exegetes, the passage continues to be seen as a difficult one and new and recycled arguments continue to circulate on the appropriate interpretation of Romans 13. The staggering number of studies written on or about

¹⁵ For a 'Wirkungsgeschichte' of Rom 13:1-7, see Ulrich Wilckens, *Der Brief an die Römer, Vol 3*, EKK, ed. Josef Blank et al (Zürich: Benziger Verlag; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1982), 43-66. For other history of interpretations, see Lutz Pohle, *Die Christen und der Staat nach Römer 13: Eine typologische Untersuchung der neueren deutschsprachigen Schriftauslegung* (Mainz: Matthias-Grünwald-Verlag, 1984), 13-19; Mark Reasoner, "Ancient and Modern Exegesis of Romans 13 under Unfriendly Governments," *Society of Biblical Literature 1999 Seminar Papers* (Atlanta, Georgia: Society of Biblical Literature, 1999), 359-374.

this text, however, is also due to its historically important place in discussions of the church-state relationship.¹⁶

Romans 13:1-7 and the Theology of State

Early Church

Romans 13:1-7 played a relatively minor role in the reflections and studies of the early Church Fathers.¹⁷ In the second century, the Christian community was a marginalised and sporadically persecuted group, and so writers drew on other texts than Romans 13, which seems to assume good relationships between Christians and the state. As Reasoner shows, when the early Fathers did refer to the text, they attempted to create a distance between its claims for subordination and the insubordination of Christians in refusing to sacrifice to the emperor and to renounce their faith.¹⁸ Interpreters before Constantine read the text in ways which created 'space' for the reality in their time of a hostile state.

Origen, for instance, advocated an original reading in line with his emphasis on allegory by arguing that Paul's use of 'psyche' in 13:1 characterises the readers as carnal (*apud Rufinus* 9, 25).¹⁹ If they were 'spiritual' Paul would call for subordination to the Lord, rather than to state authorities.²⁰ Tertullian argued that the call to subordination is to those rulers who govern as God intends, not for all rulers, and so grants the church a degree of discernment (*Scorpiae* 14).²¹

¹⁶ The distinction between these two sections of the survey should not be overstressed. It would be naïve in the extreme to suggest that 'modern' exegetical study escapes theological concerns. Nevertheless, it is more characteristic of earlier interpretations that theological concerns come explicitly to the foreground, whereas the aim of exegetical study is not church instruction but historical reconstruction.

¹⁷ For discussion, see Reasoner, "Ancient and Modern Exegesis," 359-366; Karl Hermann Schelkle, "Staat und Kirche in der patristischen Auslegung von Rm 13:1-7," *ZNW* 44 (1952-53), 223-236; Wilfrid Parsons, "The Influence of Romans XIII on Pre-Augustinian Christian Political Thought," *TS* 1, 4 (1940), 337-364.

¹⁸ Reasoner, "Ancient and Modern Exegesis," 359-366. See this text also for the following examples.

¹⁹ Reasoner: 'Ancient and Modern Exegesis,' 361-364; Schelkle, "Staat und Kirche," 223-225.

²⁰ In other contexts, however, Origen emphasises that Christians are to be obedient to the state, *Contra Cels.* 8, 65.

²¹ Parsons, "Pre-Augustinian," 339-340, also discusses some of the early Church Fathers.

Despite these qualifications, the extent to which many Christians held to a positive account of the state, even despite persecution, is striking.²² The teaching of Romans 13:1-7 undoubtedly influenced early Christian thinking about the state, even if it was not always explicitly cited. As Schelkle points out, 'Die Exegese der Bibel hat die grundsätzliche Staatsbejahung der Lehre des Paulus nie überhören können.'²³ In the Martyrdom of Polycarp, for instance, although Polycarp refuses to offer sacrifice and a petition to Caesar, he reassures his inquisitors that Christians are taught to render honour to authorities (*Mart. Pol.* 7, 10). Christians never resorted to violent revolution in defence of their cause, but would submit to martyrdom rather than disobeying God. Irenaeus also affirms the God-given rights of rulers, who function especially to restrain evil by punishing the unrighteous (*Adv. Haer.* 5, 24).²⁴

From Constantine to the Reformation

With the dawn of the age of Constantine, and the beginnings of a friendly empire, the Church reconceived its relationship to what was now a friendly government. Christian scholars began to include discussions of Romans 13:1-7 within their work. Parsons claims that Chrysostom,²⁵ in his Homily on Romans 13, was the first to distinguish between the office and the office-holder.²⁶ Obedience to the authorities is respecting and obeying the order established by God, rather than the particular figures as such. Ambrose, the fourth century bishop of Milan, also makes this point (*Enarratio in Psalmum* 37, 43), though less clearly than Chrysostom.²⁷ The separation of the office holders from the office itself seems to have been implicit in Tertullian's own comments on the rulers who fulfil God's tasks and those who do not (*Scorpiace* 14). Chrysostom's distinction, however, was probably influenced by

²² Wilckens, *an die Römer III*, 44-45.

²³ Schelkle, "Staat und Kirche," 226.

²⁴ Irenaeus also comments that unrighteous rulers will also be judged by God, *Adv. Haer.*, 5, 24, 2. Many other positive attitudes to the state are found in this period (e.g., 1 Clem. 60:4-61:1).

²⁵ Parsons, "Pre-Augustinian," 353-357.

²⁶ 'He does not speak about individual rulers but about the principle of authority itself.' Quotation from the Chrysostom Homily can be found in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, New Testament, Romans*, ed. Gerald Bray, gen. ed. Thomas C. Oden (Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 1998), 325.

²⁷ Parsons, "Pre-Augustinian," 360-362.

Aristotelian theory,²⁸ whereas Tertullian drew attention to the obvious distance between the actions of the authorities and their 'tasks' in Romans 13.

Augustine's work was central for later thinking on church-state relationships. Although he did not base his argument simply on Romans 13:1-7,²⁹ his understanding of how the church relates to the state influenced later interpretations of this text. He was one of the first to take seriously the possibility that the Church would remain within the world for a long period of time, and so believed that the church had a mission to create a society which would reflect the Church's own nature.³⁰ He was also, significantly, one of the first to justify the use of state violence against heretics (*Contra Parmen.* 1, 10, 16).³¹ Although Augustine distinguished clearly between the earthly state and the heavenly kingdom, both were ultimately from God and had certain mandates to fulfil, so Christians *could* resist the state if it opposed God's rule.

Following Augustine's work, Christians read the text as pointing to a partnership between the rule of God within the church and the rule of God through the state. Although the state has autonomy, the church could legitimately criticise or advise the state if the actions of the state harmed the spiritual welfare of its citizens. Particularly after Gregory VII (eleventh century), Popes 'regarded themselves as subject only to God who had set them in full authority over all other Christians, including their rulers.'³² By an act of excommunication a Pope could effectively destroy the temporal power of the secular authority, though this was a relatively rare occurrence. Criticism of rulers, however, could and did frequently occur.³³ In effect, God was believed to rule the world through the secular state by guiding it with the voice of the church. The church had a significant role to play in public life.

²⁸ Parsons, "Pre-Augustinian," 356-357.

²⁹ Wilfred Parsons, "The Influence of Romans XIII on Christian Political Thought II. Augustine to Hincmar," *TS* (1941), 326.

³⁰ Parsons, "Augustine to Hincmar," 326-333.

³¹ Wilckens, *an die Römer III*, 45-47.

³² Arthur Walter James, *The Christian in Politics* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 46.

³³ See Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man: A Christian Interpretation*, vol. 2, *Human Destiny* (London: Nisbet & Co. Ltd., 1943): 284-86.

Reformation and Modernity

The Reformation period damaged the theological and sociological foundations of the Catholic approach. Theologically, many of the Reformers believed that the relationship between church and state was one of coexistence and co-operation. Rather than envisioning a hierarchy of authority, as in the Catholic church, the Protestants preferred to speak in terms of the establishment of independent centres of authority. The state has its own functions and its own order in which the church should not interfere. Sociologically, the Reformation divided German states, and eventually wider territories, on the basis of their confessional viewpoints. What was once a united 'Holy Catholic Empire' became fragmented into different religious groups. As Bonhoeffer put it, 'The Reformation broke asunder the *corpus christianum*, the historical order of the Christian west, which was ruled by Emperor and Pope in the name of Jesus Christ.'³⁴

For the main-stream Reformers, Christian subordination to the state rested on the confidence that God guided the 'powers that be' to bring about His purpose. As the Christian submits to the authority of the church in matters of personal spirituality, so also the Christian should submit to the state in matters of public welfare.

Luther's 'two kingdom' approach is the classic statement of this position. Luther's thoughts on church and state underwent development, as with his theology generally. His perspective on this issue can be studied in his different writings, including his lectures on Romans 13, his address to the Christian nobility on the reform of the Christian state, and his work on 'Temporal Authority: to what extent should it be obeyed'. Luther mapped out a space for the state by arguing for the existence of certain 'orders' of creation, which included the order of the church and the order of the state.³⁵ The purpose of church authority and the purpose of state authority are different, but both are part of God's will for humanity. All of life is under God's rule. This meant that one can serve God in secular callings just as one can serve God in the church. Luther's purpose was clearly tied to his theological affirmation of secular

³⁴ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, ed. Eberhard Bethge, LPT (London: SCM Press, 1955), 30-31.

³⁵ Note this caveat by Niebuhr, 'In political relations, Luther sometimes regarded government as belonging to the "order of creation", and at other times seemed to think that its authority was derived from a special "divine ordinance", Scripturally validated, particularly in Romans XIII,' Niebuhr, *Nature*, 204-205.

life as under God,³⁶ but his view served to legitimise the autonomy of the state vis-à-vis the church. In the sixteenth century, his separation of church and state, partly justified by a particular reading of Romans 13:1-7, led to his repudiation of the Peasants revolt and his call for obedience to 'Christian princes.'³⁷

Calvin's detailed discussion of civil government appears in his Institutes (IX, XX).³⁸ His polemic against disobedience or freedom from the state was directed particularly against Anabaptists. For Calvin, magistrates too serve God. Calvin did, however, allow for disobedience to the state when magistrates exceeded their power (IX, XX, 32). For Calvin, both the church and the state had particular 'covenants' with God and justice was central in the fulfilment of the state's covenant.³⁹

The main significance of the Reformation for church-state relationships is that, 'the medieval alliance of church and state disappeared.'⁴⁰ With the Enlightenment, the separation continued to take place and, to some extent, it is still continuing today. The full import of what this means for church and society continues to be debated.

Modern Hermeneutics and the Exegesis of Romans 13

Earlier Christian discussions of Romans 13:1-7, and church-state relations generally, provide the broader context within which people have read and continue to read this text. A particular view of how Luther connected church and state has influenced many within the Protestant tradition, sometimes leading to theological justification for remaining detached from struggles for justice.⁴¹ This partly accounts for the silence of the Christian churches during the Nazi regime and, similarly, for the silence of the Dutch Reformed Church during the era of the Apartheid State in South

³⁶ Gunner Hilderdal, "Romans 13 and Luther's Doctrine of the 'Two Kingdoms'," *LW* 10 (1963), 15.

³⁷ Of course, there were other more complex reasons for Luther's position than simply his view of the church-state relationship.

³⁸ For a discussion of the reading of Rom 13:1-7 by Calvin and Melancthon, see David C. Steinmetz, "Calvin and Melancthon on Romans 13:1-7," *ExA* 2 (1986), 74-81.

³⁹ Niebuhr, *Nature*, 291-293.

⁴⁰ James, *Politics*, 59.

⁴¹ Others in the Protestant tradition of course, did not follow this particular approach (Bonhoeffer, Bultmann, Barth).

Africa.⁴² Although some have argued that Luther has been misinterpreted,⁴³ he continues to be blamed for removing Christians from responsibility within the public sphere.

Although not all scholars are heir to a particular Christian tradition, and although some claim to interpret the text from a purely 'historical-critical' standpoint, exegetes are nonetheless influenced by previous discussions. Käsemann distinguished between four different 'types' of interpretation, connected to different 'schools' of theology; 'traditional Catholic,' 'conservative Lutheranism,' 'Angelology/demonology,' and the Barthian school.⁴⁴ Although he was dealing with contemporary interpretations, Käsemann showed that they could still fit within certain 'theological' circles.

More recently, Pohle has grouped German interpretations of this text into a different four categories; 'Naturrechtlich-ordnungstheologische Interpretation' (including Catholic 'natural-law' interpretations, as well as Protestant authors who emphasise God's 'order'); 'Konkret-charismatische Interpretation' (Paul is responding to a particular situation and calls for service to God within it); 'Eschatologisch-realistische Interpretation' (the text is related to its function, not to 'natural law', and is also connected to Paul's eschatology); and the 'Christokratisch-politische Interpretation' (the state too serves Christ as Lord, even if the state does not recognise it itself).⁴⁵ Even though Pohle writes fifty years after Käsemann, he can still combine researchers in this area into groups characterised by different theological concerns. Those whom Pohle has grouped together share the same view on a number of issues, such as the occasion (or lack of it) for which Paul wrote

⁴² See the discussion of the many South African scholars upon this text; Jan Botha, *Subject to Whose Authority? Multiple Readings of Romans 13*, ESEC, ed. Vernon K. Robbins (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholar's Press, 1994.); idem, "Creation of New Meaning: Rhetorical Situation and the Reception of Romans 13:1-7," *JTSA* 79 (1992), 24-37; Klaus Nürnberger, "Theses on Romans 13," *Scriptura* 22 (1987): 40-47; B. C. Lategan, "Reception: Theory and Practice in Reading Romans 13," in *Text and Interpretation: New Approaches in the Criticism of the New Testament*, ed. P.J. Hartin and J.H. Petzer, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1991), 145-169.

⁴³ Bonhoeffer claims that, 'Luther's doctrine of the two kingdoms was *misinterpreted* as implying the emancipation and sanctification of the world and of the natural.' *Ethics*, 32-33 [Italics mine].

⁴⁴ Ernst Käsemann, "Principles of the Interpretation of Romans 13," in *New Testament Questions of Today*, NTL, ed. Alan Richardson et al., 196-216 (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1969), 201-207.

⁴⁵ Pohle, *Christen und der Staat*, 23-28.

Romans 13, the sources which Paul drew upon, and the weight one should give to the 'reasons' with which Paul justifies his call to subordination. Ironically, Käsemann is included within one of these groups, showing his own debt to theological concerns and particular positions on wider issues.

The importance of Romans 13:1-7 within the history of theology, as well as the numerous exegetical studies upon the passage, has meant that the passage, 'has become hopelessly overloaded in the history of exegesis and its influence.'⁴⁶ Because exegesis involves hermeneutical assumptions, as well as implications, it is important to be aware of those historical currents which have influenced previous interpreters.

Exegesis and the Context of Romans 13:1-7

Rather than sorting exegetes into groups determined by their theological focus, this section will discuss how scholars have answered the question of *why* Paul wrote Romans 13:1-7.⁴⁷ Interpreters have often answered this question by looking at the context of Romans 13:1-7, whether literary or historical. The explanations which have been proposed can be placed into different groups. Each explanation is followed by criticism and critique.

General Exhortation

There are some scholars who argue that Romans 13:1-7 is a general piece of advice which Paul addressed to the Roman church. There was no particular historical or situational catalyst which led to the call for subordination to the authorities, but Paul was offering a theology of state for a church that he had not yet visited.⁴⁸ In effect, this group of scholars denies any specific context for Paul's admonition, other than the general one of Paul's desire to offer broad paraenetic material. Some exegetes do

⁴⁶ Karl Wengst, *Pax Romana and the Peace of Jesus Christ*, trans. John Bowden (London: SCM Press, 1987), 80.

⁴⁷ The question of what Paul asserted within these verses awaits a detailed exegesis in chapter six. In this survey, I take for granted that 'ἐξουσίαι' in 13:1 refers to Roman officials. For substantiation of this, and an argument against the 'double-reading' of this term, see chap. six.

⁴⁸ 'His concern with the Christian's subjection to the State seems related to no particular crisis, but has all the naturalness of what appeared appropriate to the occasion of his writing.' Clinton D. Morrison, *The Powers That Be: Earthly Rulers and Demonic Powers in Romans 13.1-7*, SBT (London: SCM Press, 1960), 105.

not frame their position in such a strong way, but remain agnostic about the historical situation which may have led Paul to write the text. An example of this position is that of Stein, who claims, '[w]e can never reconstruct with certainty the situation in the church of Rome which caused Paul to write this passage.'⁴⁹ For Stein, this uncertainty is cause enough to focus solely on the meaning of the passage within its literary context.

This interpretation also fits quite nicely with the thesis that Romans itself is a summary of Paul's theology.⁵⁰ Romans 13:1-7 can be read as part of Paul's general teaching on relations with outsiders, just as the letter as a whole functions as a sort of theological treatise.

Although reading Romans 13:1-7 as a 'general exhortation' allows one to avoid the messy work and risks involved with historical reconstruction, it fails to explain the length of the passage within its context. If all Paul affirmed was traditional, non-contestable Christian teaching, then why did he not simply address the problem with a verse or two? Further, the idea that Romans is simply a 'general' letter explaining Paul's Gospel has come under heavy criticism in recent years.⁵¹

Jewish Nationalism

Some interpreters have argued that Jewish nationalism is a possible context for interpreting Romans 13:1-7. Dodd, for example, claimed that 13:2 is best interpreted, 'as a definite repudiation, on behalf of the Church, of the Zealot tendency in Judaism which was already gathering strength for the final outbreak, and might well have repercussions among Christians.'⁵²

⁴⁹ Robert H. Stein, "The Argument of Romans 13:1-7," *NovT* 31 (1989), 327

⁵⁰ 'Romans is the calm and collected summing up of Paul's position as it had been hammered out in the heat of controversy during the previous months,' T. W. Manson, "St. Paul's Letter to the Romans - and Others," in *The Romans Debate: Revised and Expanded Edition*, ed. Karl P. Donfried, 3-15 (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991), 4.

⁵¹ 'In Romans, Paul addresses a church with real tensions and struggles,' Lane, "Social Perspectives on Roman Christianity," 202. For the argument that chaps. 14-15 are addressed to an actual situation see James C. Walters, *Ethnic Issues in Paul's Letter to the Romans: Changing Self-Definitions in Earliest Roman Christianity* (Valley Forge, Pennsylvania: Trinity Press International, 1993), 84-87.

⁵² C. H. Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1932), 203. Dodd refers to Jewish revolutionary fervour as the 'Zealot tendency', but zealots technically did not exist as a group until the outbreak of the Jewish War (which is when Josephus refers to them). Although some

Marcus Borg also devoted a detailed 1973 article to argue that Paul wrote Romans 13:1-7 to dissuade Jewish Christians from participating in the Jewish revolutionary movement.⁵³ Borg begins by arguing that many of Jesus' own sayings are best interpreted against the background of revolutionary fervour in Palestine, and particularly against the background of the 'national liberation movement.'⁵⁴ Much of Romans 12:14-21 'can be traced back to a Palestinian milieu'⁵⁵ and so it is possible that Paul is addressing a similar circumstance in Rome as that which Jesus addressed in Palestine. Borg reconstructs the history of the Jews in Rome to argue for the likelihood of frequent contact between Jews in Rome and Jews in Palestine and adduces evidence for anti-Roman sentiment in Rome itself.⁵⁶

His proposal attempts to tie Romans 13:1-7 firmly to the letter as a whole, in which Paul deals with the relationship between Christians and Judaism. Paul argues that the Jews retain a place in God's plan (Rom 9-11), but this does not mean that Christians should join the Jewish revolutionary movements which opposed Roman rule. Christ bridges the chasm between Jew and Gentile but 'Jewish nationalism can only widen it, first, because it perpetuates the incorrect theological notion that God's purpose is primarily for the Jews, and second, because of the social and military hostility it engenders between Jew and Gentile.'⁵⁷ Rome bears the 'sword' as an instrument of God's wrath upon Jewish nationalism, which is a particular instance of Jewish particularism.

Although Borg's proposal attempts to read Romans within its historical and literary context, his arguments fail to persuade. There is some evidence for Jewish

scholars have connected earlier Jewish movements to the zealots (most notably, Hengel), this construct has come under heavy criticism. It is better to speak generally of Jewish revolutionary movements, or nationalist movements, throughout the first century, which includes, but is not synonymous with the zealot movement. For a persuasive criticism of the 'Zealot' theory, see Richard A. Horsley and John S. Hanson, *Bandits, Prophets, and Messiahs: Popular Movements in the Time of Jesus*, NVBS, ed. Adela Yarbro Collins and John J. Collins (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985), 216-241.

⁵³ Marcus Borg, "A New Context for Romans XIII," *NTS* 19 (1973): 205-218.

⁵⁴ Borg, "Context", 206.

⁵⁵ Borg, "Context", 207.

⁵⁶ Part of his argument includes a reinterpretation of the famous passage in Suetonius regarding the edict of Claudius. See my discussion of the historical context.

⁵⁷ Borg, "Context", 215.

nationalism within Rome,⁵⁸ but it is fairly sparse and chronologically scattered. In order to defend the claim that nationalism was an important factor for Jews in Rome, Borg also assumes a high degree of unity within Judaism, an assumption that many scholars would reject. Further, the New Testament documents are united in their implicit opposition to Jewish nationalism. This is not because they are seeking to oppose what was an incipient trend within Christianity, for which we have little evidence, but because of Jesus' own rejection of violence against enemies.⁵⁹ For followers of Jesus, participation within a revolutionary movement to establish a Jewish state would not be an option. This is confirmed by the refusal of Christians to be involved in the Jewish War,⁶⁰ a probable cause for later conflict between Jewish and Christian communities.

Taxation Protests in Rome

Friedrich, Pöhlmann and Stuhlmacher first proposed the importance of tax protests in Rome for understanding Romans 13:1-7.⁶¹ While other aspects of Paul's paraenesis in Romans 13:1-7 find parallels within other contemporary texts, the mention of paying taxes goes beyond a simple call for subordination and signals the purpose of the passage. Friedrich also points to evidence which shows that taxes were a problem in Rome at the time of Nero (Tac. *Ann.* 13:50f; Suet. *Ner.* 10). Paul wrote this passage in order to dissuade Christians from reacting negatively to the high tax rates, and so possibly attracting hostility from the State to themselves. This thesis has gained a significant following.

Dunn builds on the argument of Friedrich and emphasises that this situation of the Roman Christians, as well as the political context of the ancient world, means that Paul's argument cannot simply be applied to the contemporary world.⁶² Elliott, like Dunn, adopts the insights of Friedrich *et al* but offers a very different argument

⁵⁸ Borg, "Context", 209-210.

⁵⁹ Jesus' rejection of violence is implicit in his call to love enemies and do good to them (Matt 5:43-48, Luke 6:32-36) as well as his call for peace (Matt 5:9).

⁶⁰ Euseb. *Hist. eccl.* 3, 5, 3.

⁶¹ Friedrich "Zur historischen Situation," 156-159.

⁶² James D. G. Dunn, "Romans 13:1-7: A Charter for Political Quietism?" *ExA* 2 (1986):55-68. In his later commentary Dunn incorporates this article into his argument.

concerning Paul's purpose within this passage.⁶³ Rather than seeking to protect the Christian community as a whole, Paul aimed to protect the vulnerable Jewish Christians within Rome. The anti-Semitism present within Rome 'would have led Paul to expect that any popular outcry against exploitive taxes might be deflected onto the most vulnerable population in the city: the Jewish refugees, who come directly into view in Rom. 14:1-15:13.'⁶⁴ Thus Paul focuses the 'ethic of nonretaliation on a potentially volatile situation.'⁶⁵ Paul's purpose in Romans 13 is to persuade the gentile Christians in Rome to abstain from public protest of perceived Jewish tax exemptions/benefits. This passage, then, in no way presents Paul's 'theology of the state'.

Although these interpreters have connected the passage to a historical situation, tax protests do not form the background for Romans 13:1-7. As Wengst points out, Romans 13:6a is an indicative, not an imperative.⁶⁶ Dunn recognises this but argues that the historical context nevertheless makes it likely that 13:6 is the climax of Paul's discussion.⁶⁷ This interpretation, however, overrides the literary flow of the passage. Paul is not writing to advise the Christians at Rome to begin an action which they have neglected, but points to the paying of taxes as a further reason for why the authorities should be considered as servants of God. The weight of the passage is on the first verse with the following verses substantiating the call to subordinate.⁶⁸

Obedience to Synagogue Rulers

Nanos effectively removes the whole 'problem' of church-state relations from this passage by arguing that the rulers referred to in Romans 13:1 are not government

⁶³ Neil Elliott, *Liberating Paul: The Justice of God and the Politics of the Apostle*, (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 221-226.

⁶⁴ Elliott, *Liberating Paul*, 223.

⁶⁵ Elliott, *Liberating Paul*, 224.

⁶⁶ Wengst, *Pax Romana*, 82.

⁶⁷ James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, WBC, ed. Ralph P. Martin (Dallas, Texas: Word Books, 1988), 766.

⁶⁸ Stanley E. Porter also criticises the 'tax-hypothesis,' "Romans 13:1-7 as Pauline Political Rhetoric," *Filologia Neotestamentaria* 3 (1990), 116.

administrators but Jewish officials of the Roman synagogues.⁶⁹ He maintains that Paul wrote the passage to appeal for Christians to obey these synagogue officials, even though they were not Christian.

Nanos' discussion of Romans 13:1-7 is part of his provocative rereading of the letter as a whole. He argues that Romans does not address tensions between Jewish Christians and gentile Christians, but between gentile Christians and non-Christian Jews. Paul wrote at a time when the church at Rome was still inseparable from the synagogues and so tensions with the non-Christian Jews within the synagogue would inevitably arise. He writes to address, 'an early manifestation of the (mis)perceptions of Israel and Jews among Christian gentiles'⁷⁰ and to convince the Christian gentiles to show appropriate respect to the non-Christian Jews by following the ethical *halakhot* laid down for 'righteous gentiles'. Although Romans addresses Jewish exclusivism as well (3:27-30; 9:30 – 10:4),⁷¹ its main target is gentile Christians who arrogantly refuse to respect non-Christian Jews within the synagogue.

In Romans 13:1-7, then, Nanos argues that Paul encourages Christian gentiles 'to subordinate themselves to the institutional requirements of the synagogue(s) in addition to the ethical and purity *halakhot* that had been developed for "righteous gentiles" worshipping in the midst of the congregation of Israel.'⁷² Nanos believes that this reading connects the text closely to the wider context of 12:1 – 15:13 in which Paul exhorts the Christian gentiles concerning their lifestyle within the Roman synagogues.⁷³ He further argues that this exegesis of the text best accounts for Paul's high assessment of the 'authorities' (ordered by God etc.).

Although Nanos' proposal is a novel attempt to solve the problem of why Paul speaks of the 'authorities' in such a positive manner, his solution is unconvincing. The language used within the passage, as Strobel has pointed out, reflects traditional

⁶⁹ Mark D. Nanos, *The Mystery of Romans: The Jewish Context of Paul's Letter*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996): 289-336.

⁷⁰ Nanos, *Mystery of Romans*, 16.

⁷¹ Nanos, *Mystery of Romans*, 9.

⁷² Nanos, *Mystery of Romans*, 289.

⁷³ Nanos, *Mystery of Romans*, 295.

language associated with political authorities.⁷⁴ In contrast to the many parallels to governmental language pointed out by Strobel, Nanos' attempt to show that terms within the text *could* be applied to synagogue authorities turns up only weak parallels. Nanos further claims that Paul could not have been writing about state rulers because, 'Paul was not blind to the evils of the empire and its idolatrous foundations'.⁷⁵ However, other Jewish and Christian texts also recognise that the authorities are established by God (Wis 6:1-11; Tit 3:1; 1 Pet 3:13-17). Nanos acknowledges this but claims that an implicit or explicit judgment always accompanies these texts.⁷⁶ He has not reckoned, however, with the possibility that such an 'implicit judgment' may belong to the context in which Romans 13:1-7 is found. Finally, Nanos' proposal relies on his wider argument that Christian worship and existence took place within the synagogues and under synagogue authorities. This is itself a highly contentious claim. Its many problems render it even less likely that the 'authorities' of Romans 13:1 refer to leaders within the synagogue.

Christian Enthusiasm

For advocates of this position, the situation which led Paul to write Romans 13:1-7 was not nationalism within Judaism, but enthusiasm for the coming world within the Christian community. This may have had the effect of distancing Christians from the acknowledgement of their secular obligations, including the obligation to pay taxes and generally remain subordinate under Roman rule.

Käsemann in his essay, 'Principles of the Interpretation of Romans 13:1-7,' as well as in more detail in his later commentary, has argued for this position.⁷⁷ His discussion of the text is placed within his wider understanding of the nature of Pauline and New Testament ethics. Like Barth, Käsemann denies that any 'system'

⁷⁴ August Strobel, "Zum Verständnis Von Rm 13," *ZNW* 46 (1956), 85-93. Friedrich, "Zur historischen Situation", 135-145.

⁷⁵ Nanos, *Mystery of Romans*, 297.

⁷⁶ Nanos, *Mystery of Romans*, 299.

⁷⁷ Käsemann, "Principles," 196-216; idem. *Commentary on Romans*, trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (London: SCM Press, 1980), 350-359.

of ethics can be derived casuistically from the Scriptures.⁷⁸ Rather, the New Testament ethic is a call for believers to recognise that God's claim is upon all of human life.⁷⁹ He is reluctant to allow that an ethical position can be arrived at deductively from the New Testament, for this would jeopardise the freedom of God in calling humanity to ethical action.

Käsemann argues that the particular occasion for the composition of Romans 13:1-7 was the existence of Christian enthusiasm (cf., 12:3) which 'in virtue of heavenly citizenship views earthly authorities with indifference or contempt'.⁸⁰ Paul is opposed to such enthusiasm, because, by removing the Christian believers from the affairs of the world, it distorts the nature of Christian obedience which is obedience in service *within* the world.⁸¹ The demand of God 'verifies itself as such in the midst of earthly affliction and lowliness.'⁸² Paul's opposition to enthusiasm is the reason why he wrote this text.⁸³

The problem with this argument is, again, the lack of evidence. Käsemann's case that 12:3 indicates Christian 'enthusiasts' within the congregation is unconvincing.⁸⁴ Further, we know of no Christians within the first century who claimed that their citizenship in heaven led to a rejection of the earthly state. Käsemann's argument does, however, have a superficial similarity to our own proposal (see below). Whereas Käsemann argues that enthusiasm was a *reality* in the Roman congregation, our argument is that political insubordination (rather than 'enthusiasm' as such) was a *possibility* for Roman Christians, which was encouraged by elements of Paul's

⁷⁸ For a discussion of Barthian ethics see Richard B. Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament: Community, Cross, New Creation. A Contemporary Introduction to New Testament Ethics*, (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996), 225-39.

⁷⁹ Käsemann, "Principles," 196-97.

⁸⁰ Käsemann, *Romans*, 351.

⁸¹ Käsemann, "Principles," 214-15.

⁸² Käsemann, *Romans*, 359.

⁸³ Roetzel also claims that, 'The commands in Romans 13:1 to "be subject to the governing authorities" and to pay "taxes to who taxes are due" make sense only if some believers had understood liberation from this world to mean that one should be diffident toward or contemptuous of civil authority,' Calvin J. Roetzel, "Paul as Organic Intellectual: the Shaper of Apocalyptic Myths," in *Common Life in the Early Church: Essays Honoring Graydon F. Snyder*, ed. Julian V. Hills, 221-243 (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Trinity Press International, 1998), 234.

⁸⁴ Wengst, *Pax Romana*, 82.

symbolic world (and particularly his use of apocalyptic eschatology). It was this possibility that Paul wants to guard against in writing Romans 13:1-7, although he still retains a public space for the *ekklesiai* other than simply 'under' the state.

Pauline Apologetic

Other proposals as to why Paul wrote Romans 13:1-7 centre on the text as in some way representing an apologetic for the Christians in Rome. A number of different interpreters can be grouped in this position.

Jan Botha has presented the most recent monograph upon Romans 13:1-7. He contends that a close and responsible reading of the text should be prior to reconstructing the occasion for the text (and also to applying the text today).⁸⁵ His work attempts a 'responsible reading' of the text through approaching Romans 13:1-7 via the perspective of four disciplines; linguistics, literary criticism, rhetorical criticism, and social-scientific criticism. Botha lets each reading stand on its own, rather than attempting to integrate his various readings into one coherent whole. One of the 'results' which arises from his study, however, is that the rhetorical function of the passage is to establish Paul's 'credentials' with his readers, showing them he shares their attitude towards governing authorities. This will help persuade the readers to help Paul in his future plans.⁸⁶ Botha emphasises that this does not rule out other suggestions as to why Paul wrote this passage.

Other interpreters draw closer attention to why such an apologetic was necessary. Ernst Bammel argues that, 'Romans 13 is written as a warning to the fellow members of the community and even as an *alibi*, a proof of innocence to the officials; it is the beginning of Christian apologetic.'⁸⁷ Paul aims to counter suspicion of himself and the early Christian communities and to combat potential disloyalty to the state among Christian libertines or activists.⁸⁸ In this passage, Paul explicates a 'theology of the state' but it is a theology which is necessitated by the historical situation. Romans

⁸⁵ Botha, *Subject*, 4-8.

⁸⁶ Botha, *Subject*, 222-224.

⁸⁷ Bammel, "Romans 13," 375.

⁸⁸ Bammel, "Romans 13," 369-71.

13:1-7 is not ‘the typically Pauline approach’⁸⁹ and needs to be set alongside other Pauline texts, such as 1 Thessalonians 5 and 2 Thessalonians 2.⁹⁰ Klaus Wengst has also suggested that Paul wrote Romans 13:1-7 in order to refute claims that he was politically insubordinate or disloyal to the Roman government.⁹¹ He differs from Bammel in that he believes Paul is defending himself against such a suspicion before other Christians, rather than defending the early Christian community before the state. He also points out that, ‘[t]he weight of this passage clearly lies on this admonition to loyalty’⁹² and so the warrants for the admonition ‘merely have an auxiliary function.’⁹³ Wengst also points out that what Paul says in this passage must be read within its context and balanced with passages such as 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 and Romans 8:31-39.

Schottroff grounds Rom 13:1-7 within the wider context of chaps. 12 – 13, as well as within early Christian ‘resistance to Satan’ (which includes non-retaliation).⁹⁴ Persecution by non-Christian neighbours, leading to denunciations, is implied in 12:14-21. This is a persecution caused by Christian refusal to participate in festivals and economic-gain, ‘If one considers that Roman society orientated itself in all of its politics to the interests of the wealthy (*plousioi*), the explosive power of the Christian faith becomes clear.’⁹⁵ Schottroff, then, also advocates a historical context of persecution for the exhortation and connects Romans 13:1-7 firmly to its literary context.

Whereas Botha’s proposal draws attention to the way in which Paul’s exhortation establishes a certain ‘ethos’ which the Roman community would share, the others within this group point to suspicion of Christians vis-à-vis the State, or tensions in

⁸⁹ Bammel, “Romans 13,” 375,

⁹⁰ Bammel, “Romans 13,” 375-81.

⁹¹ Wengst, *Pax Romana*, 82-83.

⁹² Wengst, *Pax Romana*, 83.

⁹³ Wengst, *Pax Romana*, 84.

⁹⁴ Schottroff, “‘Give to Caesar What Belongs to Caesar and to God What Belongs to God’: A Theological Response of the Early Christian Church to Its Social and Political Environment,” In *The Love of Enemy and Nonretaliation in the New Testament*, ed. Willard M. Swartley (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), 223-257.

⁹⁵ Schottroff, “Give to Caesar,” 249.

this relationship, as the reason for why Paul wrote Rom 13:1-7. Interpreters within this group have not, however, followed up their insights by discussing in detail the ways in which Christians would have been considered subversive – politically or culturally.⁹⁶

Romans 13:1-7 and the Politics of Paul

Previous scholars have attempted to connect Paul's exhortation in Romans 13:1-7 to its broader literary and historical situation. Disagreement on the appropriate context for interpreting this passage, however, has meant a wide diversity of opinion on what Paul's purpose was in this text. This thesis advances a view similar to the last group of interpreters discussed above; Romans 13:1-7 serves as a limited 'apology for the state'. It is an apology because it defends the legitimacy of certain governmental functions, but it is limited because it sits alongside implicit negative assessments of the state. Paul calls for obedience to the governing authorities in light of the political motifs within his letter, but these motifs retain their own integrity alongside the call to subordination.⁹⁷ Whereas previous interpreters have only alluded to reasons for the necessity of this apologetic, this thesis attempts to ground it contextually in Paul's apocalyptic eschatology and the historical-cultural situation in Rome, in which imperial ideology was central.⁹⁸

To label this text as 'apologetic' is not intended to reduce Paul's instructions to 'mere rhetoric'. Rather, it indicates the broader context within which Paul framed his instructions. The occasion which led Paul to write Romans 13:1-7 was not a historically specific event, nor a situation within the Roman Christian communities, but was comprised by two factors: (1) the political motifs implicit in his explication

⁹⁶ Wengst is somewhat of an exception, who argues that the Christian proclamation of peace conflicted with the *Pax Romana*; Wengst, *Pax Romana*, 55-135.

⁹⁷ Chap. 6 will argue that Rom 13:1-7 does not collapse Christianity into a private club uninterested in society and politics. The broader context of the text shows that the *ekklesia* still functioned as a kind of alternative society.

⁹⁸ Several interpreters have noted the importance of Paul's eschatological perspective in 13:10-14 for qualifying Paul's instructions. Martin Dibelius, "Rom und die Christen im ersten Jahrhundert," in *Botschaft und Geschichte: Gesammelte Aufsätze, zweiter Band: Zum Urchristentum und zur hellenistischen Religionsgeschichte* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1956), 184-185. This thesis takes seriously Paul's apocalyptic perspective throughout Romans as part of the context for the passage.

of God's redeeming righteousness, features indebted to apocalyptic eschatology, (2) and the locale of his readers, in the city which was the centre of imperial ideology.

The view that Paul was a political thinker runs contrary to a long and rich tradition that claims Paul was politically conservative, or at least uninvolved in the political sphere. Both Deissmann and Schweitzer influenced twentieth century interpreters by depicting Paul as apolitical. Deissmann argued that, despite 'polemical parallelism' between terms for Caesar and Christ, early Christianity could not have been political because it was a lower-class phenomenon.⁹⁹ Although the 'lower-class' view of early Christianity has been undermined,¹⁰⁰ the belief that the early Christians were 'apolitical' remains. Deissmann's contention also assumed, patronisingly, that the 'lower classes' had no political life, an assumption which we will critique in the following chapter. Schweitzer based his case for an 'apolitical' Paul on Paul's apocalyptic perspective. Knowing that the world would soon end, Paul had no need to deal with the state other than to lie low and obey it.¹⁰¹ Significantly, both interpreters appealed to Romans 13:1-7 as justification for their positions. Most recent interpreters address Paul's attitude to the state by similar appeals to Romans 13:1-7.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ 'Politically the earliest Christianity were comparatively indifferent, not as Christianity, but as a movement among the humble classes, whose lot had undoubtedly been on the whole improved by the Imperium,' Adolf Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East: The New Testament Illustrated by Recently Discovered Texts of the Graeco-Roman World*, rev. and exp. ed., trans. Lionel R. M. Strachan (London: Hodder and Stoughton Publishers, 1927), 339. Deissmann follows this comment with an extensive demonstration of the 'polemical parallelism' between terms for Caesar and terms for Christ, 340-377.

¹⁰⁰ Wayne A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1983), 51-73.

¹⁰¹ Albert Schweitzer, *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle*, trans. William Montgomery (London: A. & C. Black, 1931), 314-317. Despite the debt owed to Schweitzer for recognising apocalyptic eschatology as central for Paul and early Christianity, his 'apolitical' reading of apocalyptic in Paul has misled many interpreters. That apocalyptic eschatology was a 'political' phenomenon will be demonstrated in the following chapter. However, Schweitzer *also* claims that Paul maintains a useful 'fiction' in his positive portrayal of the state, as he believed that it would be judged by God in the imminent eschaton.

¹⁰² Other arguments are occasionally advanced. Ellis, for instance, argues that Paul's perspective was more Epicurean (withdrawing from the world) than Stoic (engaging with it), and points to Paul's 'apolitical' reading of the Hebrew Bible as evidence for this; E. Earle Ellis, *Pauline Theology: Ministry and Society* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans; Exeter, UK: The Paternoster Press, 1989), 151-165. However, Paul's nonnationalistic reading of the Hebrew Bible should not be construed as 'apolitical'. Politics is greater than nation states.

Scholars have inherited the tradition that Paul was an apolitical theological thinker.

As Elliott notes,

*The Paul we hear has been thoroughly depoliticized, the social and political dimensions of his work have been suppressed, and a narrow band of theological themes have been amplified, even to the point where a phrase like “the politics of Paul” may strike us as nonsensical.*¹⁰³

Because this thesis relies on tracing ‘political’ motifs in Paul’s theology, specifically in Romans, it is necessary to define the way in which we are using ‘politics’ and ‘political’. Only when we understand the sphere of the political in antiquity is it possible to demonstrate how and to what extent Paul’s theology involved political themes. What is politics? How was Paul ‘political’?

Broadly speaking, *ancient politics was concerned with both the practice and with the nature of rule*. Within Roman antiquity, politics obviously involved the management and administration of the empire, from the emperor down to the many local officials who represented Roman rule in the Provinces. Philosophically and theologically speaking, however, Roman politics was concerned with the nature and justification of rule. Political leaders exercised sovereignty over their subjects, and philosophers, religious leaders and the people reflected on the legitimacy and nature of their rule. Definitions of ‘politics’ which neglect either the praxis or the theory of actual rule are in danger of over-broadening the concept.¹⁰⁴

Paul was clearly not a political thinker in any conventional sense. He was not a statesman after the manner of Cicero, nor a political philosopher like Plato, promulgating an ideal state. His letters deal with themes of God and righteousness,

¹⁰³ Elliott, *Liberating Paul*, 57. For documentation of this tradition, see Part One of Elliott’s work, entitled ‘Paul in the Service of Death’; *Liberating Paul*, 3-90. Elliott claims that this process began in the earliest period with the pseudepigraphal Paulines, but this drives an unnecessary wedge between Paul and his earliest interpreters. Despite the presence of the *Haustafeln* etc. in the DtPaulines, there is also material suggestive of a more critical stance towards society and the state. For a criticism of a similar ‘depoliticisation’ within studies of the historical Jesus, see Marcus J. Borg, *Conflict, Holiness, and Politics in the Teaching of Jesus* (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Trinity Press International, 1984/1998), 22-36.

¹⁰⁴ Borg’s suggestion that politics is best defined as ‘the concern about the structure and purpose of a historical community’ falls into this trap; Borg, *Conflict, Holiness, and Politics*, 23. The definition includes almost everything concerned with any community, and so loses its relevance to the way the rulers function.

humanity and sin, Christ and redemption, the Spirit and the churches. Paul does not deal ostensibly with the practice or nature of rule. How, then, was Paul political?

Those interpreters who maintain that Paul was political belong to a wide spectrum of theological positions and argue on a number of different grounds for the political context and content of Paul's message.¹⁰⁵ They agree that the connection between politics, society and religion in antiquity means that it is difficult to characterise Paul in apolitical terms. Aside from this broad agreement, these interpreters differ in the manner in which and the extent to which they characterise Paul as political.

Many advocates of a political Paul follow Deissmann's suggestion that a 'polemical parallelism' exists between terms found in Paul's letters and terms found in broader civic discourse.¹⁰⁶ Notions such as 'concordia,' 'ekklesia,' and, indeed, 'saviour' are said to subvert contemporary political notions. As Georgi puts it, 'If the terms chosen by Paul for his Roman readers have associations with the slogans of Caesar religion, then Paul's gospel must be understood as competing with the gospel of the Caesars.'¹⁰⁷ In his discussion of Romans, Georgi argues that central Pauline terms, such as 'righteousness', 'peace' and 'faith', are used in a manner similar to the civic sphere.¹⁰⁸ Similarly, Wengst makes a great deal out of the contrast between the early Christian discussions of 'peace' (eirene/pax), and the Roman use of the term, arguing that conflict between these understandings of peace were inevitable.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁵ Wengst, *Pax Romana*; Elliott, *Liberating Paul*; Dieter Georgi, *Theocracy in Paul's Praxis and Theology*, trans. David E. Green (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991); Richard J. Cassidy, *Paul in Chains: Roman Imprisonment and the Letters of St. Paul* (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 2001). See also the two collections of essays, edited by Richard A. Horsley, *Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society*, (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Trinity Press International, 1997); *Paul and Politics: Ekklesia, Israel, Imperium, Interpretation. Essays in Honor of Krister Stendahl*, (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Trinity Press International, 2000), esp. the essay by Elliott found in the second collection, ('Paul and the Politics of Empire', 17-39), which discusses this development in Pauline studies, and the essay by Wright ('Paul's Gospel and Caesar's Empire', 160-183). Wright gives a good example of a 'political' approach to Paul and avoids divorcing this from more conventional theological readings of the letter.

¹⁰⁶ Whereas Deissmann denied the significance of this parallelism, however, these interpreters claim that they add a political dimension to Paul's writings. Cf., Georgi, *Theocracy*, Wengst, *Pax Romana*.

¹⁰⁷ Georgi, *Theocracy*, 87

¹⁰⁸ Georgi, *Theocracy*, 79-104.

¹⁰⁹ Wengst, *Pax Romana*. Wengst examines different traditions dealing with 'peace' in early Christianity, including Paul, Luke, Clement, and Revelation.

These scholars, then, assume that Paul was ‘political’ insofar as he relied on civic/political terminology in the explication of his gospel. It is not clear, however, whether the use of such terminology in a theological/religious sphere was necessarily in conflict with its use in a civic/political sphere. Further, even if it can be demonstrated that the terminology used by Paul was taken from the political realm, Paul could have intended to *emulate* the political sphere rather than *subvert* it. Thus, Fiorenza argues that Paul’s ‘politics of othering’ (whereby he censure and vilifies his opponents) mirrors the hierarchical system of the Empire.¹¹⁰ Paul may also have ‘sacralised’ political terms without thereby commenting on Roman rule as such.

Other interpreters focus on the content of Paul’s letters, and attempt to show that themes within Paul’s letters were contrary to themes of civic discourse and so conflicted with Roman rule.¹¹¹ Often these interpreters focus on particular texts in Paul’s letters that are open to ‘political’ readings, such as Philippians 2 – 3.¹¹² Just as some believe that Paul challenged ancient misogyny by allowing women a role within his churches,¹¹³ so others argue that Paul challenged or subverted imperial rule by creating a community in which political divisions ceased to matter, or were at least subordinated to citizenship in the community of Christ. Others focus on the figure of Christ, and the way in which devotion to Christ replaced devotion to the emperor in communities of Christians.

Richard Cassidy’s recent work is illustrative of interpretations that trace political themes in Paul’s letters. Most interpreters attempt to balance Romans 13:1-7 against other ‘political’ texts in Paul, but Cassidy argues that only Paul’s later, post-

¹¹⁰ Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, “Paul and the Politics of Interpretation,” in *Paul and Politics: Ekklesia, Israel, Imperium, Interpretation. Essays in Honor of Krister Stendahl*, ed. Richard A. Horsley (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Trinity Press International, 2000), 40-57. For Fiorenza, interpreters must also recognise their own ethical task in appropriating the text, and particularly in assessing the significance of its particular power perspective.

¹¹¹ Cf., Wright, Elliott, and those collected in the Horsley volumes.

¹¹² David Seeley, “The Background of the Philippians Hymn (2:6-11),” *JHC* 1 (1994), 49-72; Peter Oakes, *Philippians: From People to Letter*, SNTSMS, ed. Richard Bauckham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 129-174; Wright, “Paul’s Gospel,” 173-181.

¹¹³ Although, of course, the evidence is far from one-sided. Those who claim that Paul shared the hierarchical values of his time can appeal to texts such as 1 Cor 11:2-16; 14:34-35; Eph 5:22-23, while those who depict Paul in more egalitarian terms point to passages such as Gal 3:16; Rom 16:1-16; and Phil 4:2-3.

imprisonment letters involved political motifs.¹¹⁴ As a free apostle, Paul expressed an uncritical endorsement of Roman rule, represented in Romans 13:1-7. Following his imprisonment, however, Paul critiqued the Empire as part of his gospel, a critique he expressed especially while ‘in chains’ with Philippians (Phil 3:8-10, 18-21; 2:10, 15). Thus, ‘Paul’s perspective in Rom 13:1-7 represents only his *initial* perspective on the Roman authorities. His ultimate, defining perspective, a perspective explicitly grounded in Paul’s allegiance to Jesus, is expressed in Philippians.’¹¹⁵ Cassidy’s treatment of political themes in Paul is careful and convincing, but he overdraws the contrast between Paul’s perspective as a ‘free apostle’ and as an ‘imprisoned apostle’. The allegiance to Jesus which Cassidy finds so politically subversive in Philippians (Phil 2:6-11; 3:7-11) is also found in Paul’s pre-imprisonment letters (Rom 10:9-13). When Cassidy does argue for political texts within Paul’s letters, however, his focus is clearly on motifs rather than vocabulary.

The focus on political *themes* in Paul’s letters is more sophisticated than arguments from political *terms* found in Paul, but there is a connection between these positions. The problem with these approaches is that while they show that there was the *possibility* of conflict between those who accepted Paul’s gospel and their political environment, they do not exclude the possibility that Christians lived happily as citizens of both worlds. Christians, like other groups, may have used political vocabulary as part of their self-understanding without thereby viewing themselves as in conflict with the Empire.

Before discussing my own approach, it would also be useful to divide interpretations into what one might call ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ theories on the political Paul.¹¹⁶ The ‘hard’ theory is that Paul *deliberately* critiqued state power to undermine gentile religious allegiance to the Roman Empire. The coming kingdom allowed no compromise with the Caesars, and Paul’s aim was to set up a Christian counter-culture to prepare the way for *God’s* kingdom. Georgi and Elliott clearly fall within this category. Georgi

¹¹⁴ Cassidy, *Paul in Chains*. A shorter presentation of the same material is found in Richard J. Cassidy, *Christians and Roman Rule in the New Testament: New Perspectives*, CompNT, ed. Charles Talbert (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 2001), 68-103.

¹¹⁵ Cassidy, *Paul in Chains*, 18.

¹¹⁶ This distinction is purely heuristic and is certainly not watertight. It allows us, however, to place this thesis in contrast to and continuity with previous theories of the political Paul.

argues that Paul deliberately critiqued the Roman Empire, and intended to show its incommensurability with God's kingdom.¹¹⁷ For Elliott, Paul was a political provocateur, conscious that his theology challenged the hegemony of the Roman Empire.¹¹⁸ Elliott maintains that the canonical placement and numerous additions to the Pauline corpus have castrated its fundamentally political nature.¹¹⁹ Both Georgi and Elliott maintain that Paul's resistance to Rome was direct and active, even if it did not involve violent resistance.

In contrast to this 'hard' view of the political Paul, the 'soft' view is that Paul *implicitly* critiqued Rome in advocating his vision of the Christian community. This critique, however, was a secondary consequence of Paul's gospel, not its primary aim. Wright, for instance, argues that Paul's critique of empire was part of his broader judgment of paganism.¹²⁰ Cassidy, as I noted earlier, posits a development from a seemingly apolitical early Paul to a politically aware later Paul. Even the later Paul, however, remains focused on the main features of the gospel announcement.

This thesis advocates the softer view of Paul's critique of the state. Paul is political because his theology impinged upon the *nature* of rule, but not because he intended to subvert the Empire. Romans 13:1-7 is a real problem for advocates of a 'hard view' of the political Paul, but on the 'soft' view, the text makes sense. To anticipate our later argument, Paul wrote Romans 13:1-7 because he was aware that elements in his theology could lead believers to deny that they owed obedience to Roman rulers, or even lead them to view the Christian community as supersessionist of the Roman Empire.

Political themes in Paul's theology were connected to his Jewish background. As is well known, Judaism at the time of Paul was not simply a belief or a 'theology', but a way of life. The Torah was intended to regulate civic and social life, as well as to instruct Jews on the nature of God and their destiny as a people. The Torah was a

¹¹⁷ Georgi, *Theocracy*, 87.

¹¹⁸ Elliott summarises the message of Romans as affirming that, '*The justice of God is not what the empire calls justice*,' Elliott, *Liberating Paul*, 195.

¹¹⁹ Elliott, *Liberating Paul*, 25-54.

¹²⁰ Tom Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said: Was Paul of Tarsus the Real Founder of Christianity* (Oxford: A Lion Book, 1997), 77-94.

political as well as a 'religious' document. Even under foreign rule, Jews retained a degree of political autonomy, and so typically honoured their foreign overlords. The political features of Judaism, then, did not necessarily lead to revolt against foreign rulers. Jews usually accepted the (limited) legitimacy of foreign rule.

There were particular periods, however, when Jews protested against imperial hegemony. As I shall argue in chapter two, one of the ways Jews protested at foreign rule was through writing apocalyptic literature, and adopting an apocalyptic world view. Although all Jews were 'political' insofar as their Judaism was a civic as well as a 'religious' entity, Jews who assumed a narrative of apocalyptic eschatology were politically subversive insofar as they used the narrative to protest against imperial claims. This does not mean that they necessarily encouraged violence against oppressors, nor does it mean that they encouraged the wrath of imperial authorities against them. It did mean, however, that the adaptation of apocalyptic eschatology engendered a suspicion of foreign rulers and hostility towards them.

Political themes in Paul's theology can be traced to his adoption of apocalyptic eschatology in interpreting the Christ event. Paul assumed a political perspective as a Jew, as all Jews did, but as an apocalyptic Jew (in some respects at least), he assumed a position inherently critical of the state. Paul wrote Romans 13:1-7 in order to minimise potentially insubordinationist readings of his theology arising from the apocalyptic framework. At the same time, the apocalyptic framework witnesses to a degree of political ambivalence towards foreign rule in Paul.

This thesis, then, will trace political themes within Paul's gospel, and specifically within Romans, by examining the way in which Paul utilises apocalyptic eschatology in the exposition of his gospel. Paul's letters are distant from the practical concerns of imperial management, but they traversed the political sphere insofar as they explained how God's rule works itself out in the world in apocalyptic terms. They impinged on the nature of rule, by adopting an apocalyptic framework that implicitly critiqued the political sphere. Other interpreters have highlighted the political implications of apocalyptic eschatology but, surprisingly, these are minority voices.¹²¹ This is despite the fact that the political importance of apocalyptic in

¹²¹ Richard A Horsley, *Bandits, Prophets, and Messiahs*, 16-20; Bruce Lincoln, "Apocalyptic Temporality and Politics in the Ancient World," *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism*, vol. 1, *The*

Revelation is frequently stressed.¹²² Paul's explication of his gospel in Romans also receives a political dimension because of the historical context of Rome, which was the centre of imperial ideology. The gospel shaped by the apocalyptic worldview conflicted with the claims of imperial ideology and made it necessary for Paul to instruct Christians on obedience to government authorities. The political contexts of Romans 13:1-7 has implications for interpreting its content.

The Occasion and Context of Romans

Previous Directions

Romans presents somewhat of a puzzle for its readers. Whereas the historical circumstances for the composition of other Pauline letters are relatively clear, the occasion of Romans is much more difficult to determine.¹²³ Why did Paul write to a church he did not know and compose such a lengthy letter for it? As Campbell notes, '[s]omething specifically compels Paul to stop at Corinth and take a great deal of time out of a busy schedule to compose carefully the discourse that is Romans (his longest single letter) and to have it sent to Rome, where it will arrive a matter of perhaps a few months ahead of himself.'¹²⁴ Understanding why Paul wrote Romans is important because it indicates why he chooses to address certain topics and who his audience is. We must also ask how political features of Romans might relate to Paul's purpose in writing the letter.

Different approaches to the letter have led to conflicting conclusions about its purpose. Some interpreters allow chapters 1 – 11 to control their understanding of the

Origins of Apocalypticism in Judaism and Christianity, ed. John J. Collins (New York/London: Continuum, 2000), 457-475; Elliott, *Liberating Paul*, 140-180.

¹²² Note the critique of the imperial cult in Rev 13.

¹²³ For brief surveys of studies on the occasion for Romans, see A.J. M. Wedderburn, *The Reasons for Romans*, SNTW, ed. John Riches (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988), 1-20; L. Ann Jervis, *The Purpose of Romans: A Comparative Letter Structure Investigation*, JSNTSup, ed. David Hill (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), 14-27.

¹²⁴ Douglas A. Campbell, "Determining the Gospel through Rhetorical Analysis in Paul's Letter to the Roman Christians," in *Gospel in Paul: Studies on Corinthians, Galatians and Romans for Richard N. Longenecker*, ed. L. Ann Jervis and Peter Richardson, 315-336, (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 332.

letter as a whole, focusing on Romans as an account of Paul's theology.¹²⁵ Others argue that the social divisions reflected in chaps. 14 – 15 give the key to the letter as a whole.¹²⁶ A third approach draws attention to the opening and closing sections of the letter for understanding Paul's purpose in writing.¹²⁷ Most interpreters combine these three elements, but weigh them differently. What is clear is that understanding the purpose of Romans is important for a correct exegesis. A congruent interpretation of the purpose of Romans illuminates the function of particular sections.

One traditional school of thought views Romans as a general presentation of Pauline theology. Melanchthon famously represented this position in his description of Romans as 'a compendium of Christian doctrine'. Modern advocates of such a view are not hard to find; Manson describes Romans as 'the calm and collected summing-up of Paul's position as it had been hammered out in the heat of controversy during the previous months.'¹²⁸ Bornkamm argues that the original letter consisted of Romans 1-15, where Paul develops a general presentation of his theology, in which 'the occasional dress, so to speak, has been removed.'¹²⁹ Other advocates of this position reconstruct different historical occasions which lend coherence to this view of the letter. Bruce argues that Paul writes to gain support for his mission to Spain, and he hopes to gain this support by presenting his gospel to them.¹³⁰ For other

¹²⁵ Manson, "St. Paul's Letter to the Romans," 3-15.

¹²⁶ Paul S. Minear, *The Obedience of Faith: The Purposes of Paul in the Epistle to the Romans*, SBT, ed. C. F. D. Moule et al. (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1971).

¹²⁷ Jervis, *Purpose of Romans*.

¹²⁸ T.W. Manson, "St. Paul's Letter to the Romans," 4.

¹²⁹ Günther Bornkamm, "The Letter to the Romans as Paul's Last Will and Testament," in *The Romans Debate: Revised and Expanded Edition*, ed. Karl P. Donfried, 16-28 (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991), 25.

¹³⁰ F. F. Bruce, "The Romans Debate - Continued," in *The Romans Debate: Revised and Expanded Edition*, ed. Karl P. Donfried, 174-194 (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991), 193; Aune claims that Paul's letter serves as his 'self-introduction' to the church at Rome; David E. Aune, *The New Testament in Its Literary Environment*, (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co, 1987), 219-220. So also Cranfield, although he acknowledges that other reasons also play a role; C. E. B. Cranfield *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 2 vols, ICC, ed. J. A. Emerton and C. E. B. Cranfield (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975-79), vol. 2, 814-824.

scholars, Paul's visit to Jerusalem and proposed defence of his apostolate play a more central role in his letter.¹³¹

Romans can also be interpreted as a response to a situation within the Roman community. Interpreters who take this view differ over whether this situation is related to doctrine or to behaviour, but agree that a situation in Rome makes more sense of why Paul wrote Romans than does a situation in Paul's life. Stuhlmacher argues that Paul writes Romans in preparation for his intended visit to Rome and to enlist help from the Roman Christians in his planned mission in the east. Paul is aware that many Jewish Christians doubt the validity of his gospel and so he writes Romans as 'an exposition and clarification of that gospel vis-à-vis the criticism Paul knows to be rampant in Rome.'¹³² Paul Minear, on the other hand, holds that Paul addresses problems of behaviour when writing Romans. He argues that five distinct factions can be identified within Romans 14:1 – 15:16, and that these provide the key for understanding why Paul wrote Romans.¹³³ Similarly, although Wedderburn argues that a 'cluster of different interlocking factors' led Paul to write his letter, the main factor which influences his interpretation of Romans is the conflict between Judaizing Christians and law-free Christians in the church.¹³⁴ Thus, 12:1-15:13 is directed towards a specific situation in the Roman church,¹³⁵ and the pervasive theme of righteousness throughout the letter body shows that Paul was both defending himself against the charge that his gospel led to unrighteousness, and the accusation that it jeopardised God's faithfulness.¹³⁶

A handful of previous interpreters have framed their discussions of the letter in terms of its political character. Wengst does not describe his view of Romans as such, but

¹³¹ Jacob Jervell, "The Letter to Jerusalem," in *The Romans Debate: Revised and Expanded Edition*, ed. Karl P. Donfried, 53-64 (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991), 59.

¹³² Peter Stuhlmacher, "The Purpose of Romans," in *The Romans Debate: Revised and Expanded Edition*, ed. Karl P. Donfried, 231-242 (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991), 236. Campbell also argues that Paul opposes Jewish-Christians within the Romans; Campbell, "Determining the Gospel," 320-31.

¹³³ Minear, *Obedience*, 8-17.

¹³⁴ Wedderburn, *Reasons*, 69-89.

¹³⁵ Wedderburn, *Reasons*, 87.

¹³⁶ Wedderburn, *Reasons*, 112-115.

points out the extent of 'anti-imperial' rhetoric throughout the letter.¹³⁷ Georgi, congruent with his portrait of Paul as a 'politically aggressive' Jew, argues that Paul's focus on Judaism throughout Romans is in fact a hidden assault on Roman theology and political power, reflected in the 'political' vocabulary throughout the letter.¹³⁸ Elliott's recent work, in opposition to what he sees as conventional 'depoliticized' readings of Paul, views Romans as Paul's attempt to combat gentile Christian boasting and a call for concrete acts of solidarity with persecuted Jews.¹³⁹ The Jewish philosopher Jacob Taubes describes the letter bluntly as 'eine politische Kampfansage an den Cäsaren.'¹⁴⁰ Many of these interpreters, while offering helpful insights into various aspects of the letter, have allowed their 'political' vision to cloud the other situations which Romans is intended to address. This leads to some clearly tendentious readings, such as Georgi's interpretation of 'law' within Romans as denoting law in general, and the Roman law in particular.¹⁴¹ One recent scholar who has avoided the imbalance of many of the 'political' readings is N. T. Wright who, while affirming that Paul combats a specific situation at Rome, acknowledges that a 'political' agenda also lies in the background.¹⁴²

The following argument for the occasion of the letter locates Romans in quite a particular situation. In addressing this specific situation, however, the letter creates a world of its own which challenges the political as well as religious context of the Roman Christians.

¹³⁷ Wengst, *Pax Romana*.

¹³⁸ Georgi, *Theocracy*.

¹³⁹ Elliott, *Liberating Paul*, 139.

¹⁴⁰ Jacob Taubes, *Die Politische Theologie des Paulus: Vorträgen gehalten an der Forschungsstätte der evangelischen Studiengemeinschaft in Heidelberg, 23. - 27. Februar, 1987*, ed. Aleida Assmann et al. (München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1993), 27. Taubes' argument for a political reading of Paul draws attention to political aspects of Paul's proclamation of a crucified Messiah. In discussing Romans, he also draws attention to political elements of the opening and closing of the letter. Chap. 4 of this thesis examines the political features of Paul's interpretation of Christ in Romans.

¹⁴¹ In a footnote on Rom 2:1, he claims that Paul 'is talking about all allegiance to the obligations imposed by any law whatever,' Georgi, *Theocracy*, 80.

¹⁴² N. T. Wright, 'A Fresh Perspective on Paul,' T. W. Manson Memorial Lecture, 26th Oct, 2000 (unpublished); Wright, 'Paul's Gospel,' 170-173.

Romans as a Response to Gentile Christian Hostility to Jewish Christians

A variety of factors prompted Paul to compose Romans. Paul's argument was the ground for his appeal for help from the Roman Christians in his mission to Spain (15:24), and Paul also asks the Roman Christians for support in his upcoming trip to Jerusalem (15:30-33). Both of these situations meant that Paul's letter had to be broad enough to reflect his gospel vision. Although these factors contribute to the shape of Paul's argument, Paul's primary aim in writing Romans was to counter gentile Christian hostility to Jewish Christians.¹⁴³ Only if Paul dealt with this hostility could he rely on a united front in Rome, which would support him in his mission and work in Spain.¹⁴⁴ A number of factors support this approach to Romans.

First of all, we know that gentile Christians were far more prominent in Rome than Jewish Christians. Although this is not direct evidence for our argument, it provides its broader context, as a heavily gentile Christian population was more likely to look down on a minority of Jewish Christians.¹⁴⁵ The mainly gentile audience in Romans is indicated in the opening of Paul's letter. Romans 1:6 identifies the readers as within Paul's vocational sphere, among the gentiles whom it is Paul's mission to serve.¹⁴⁶ Paul's desire to 'reap some harvest' in Rome (1:13-15) also connects the

¹⁴³ Other advocates for this position include Wiefel, "Jewish Community," 96-101; and William S. Campbell, in his collection of essays, *Paul's Gospel in an Intercultural Context: Jew and Gentile in the Letter to the Romans*, SIHC (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1991), especially, "Why did Paul Write Romans?," 14-24, and, "A Theme for Romans," 161-199.

¹⁴⁴ For the importance of Paul's mission for Romans, see Robert Jewett, "Ecumenical Theology for the Sake of Mission: Romans 1:1-7 + 15:14-16:24," in *Pauline Theology, Volume III: Romans*, ed. David M. Hay and E. Elizabeth Johnson (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 89-108. In response to Jewett, J. Paul Sampley points out that 'mission' for Paul was broad enough to include healing Jewish-Gentile division in Rome, "Romans in a Different Light: A Response to Robert Jewett," in *Pauline Theology, Volume III: Romans*, ed. David M. Hay and E. Elizabeth Johnson, 109-129 (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 112-115. N. T. Wright also argues that Paul counters supersessionist tendencies among Gentile Christians in Rome, but recognises the importance of mission for this, N. T. Wright, "Romans and the Theology of Paul," in *Pauline Theology, Volume III: Romans*, ed. David M. Hay and E. Elizabeth Johnson, 30-67 (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 34-36.

¹⁴⁵ Anti-Jewish sentiment was prominent within Rome. See Wiefel, "Jewish Community", 87-88.

¹⁴⁶ Brändle and Stegemann point out that this does not exclude Jewish-Christian presence in Rome, but does show that the majority of the addressees are Gentile Christians; Rudolf Brändle, and Ekkehard W. Stegemann, "The Formation of the First 'Christian Congregations' in Rome in the Context of the Jewish Congregations," in *Judaism and Christianity in First-Century Rome*, ed. Karl P. Donfried and Peter Richardson, 117-127 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), 124-25.

recipients to the rest of the gentiles.¹⁴⁷ Prosopographical indications in Romans 16 support the view that gentile Christians made up the majority of the congregation. Although textual confusion around the later chapters of Romans has led interpreters to question whether Rom 16 was a part of the original letter,¹⁴⁸ the majority of recent commentators have been persuaded by Harry Gamble's extensive defence of Romans 16 as part of Paul's original letter.¹⁴⁹ Lampe's work substantiates the conclusions of Gamble and offers further evidence that Romans 16 belongs to Romans 1 - 15.¹⁵⁰ Both authors point out that the length of the greetings in chapter 16 attests to the unique situation of Paul's letter and serve as a 'reference' for Paul.¹⁵¹ A study of the names listed in Romans 16 shows that many of the Roman Christians were probably

¹⁴⁷ Steve Mason claims that 'the rest of the Gentiles' in 1:13b is in contrast to the Gentiles of the east, and so does not indicate that the readers are gentiles, Steve Mason, "For I am Not Ashamed of the Gospel' (Rom. 1.16): The Gospel and the First Readers of Romans," in *Gospel in Paul: Studies on Corinthians, Galatians and Romans for Richard N. Longenecker*, ed. L. Ann Jervis and Peter Richardson, 254-287 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 270. This, however, is not the most likely reading of the grammar here. Mason's claim is part of his broader argument in which he argues that Paul addresses *Jewish* Christians in Romans and that the evidence for a gentile Christian majority does not stand up to scrutiny. Mason is led to this conclusion partly because of the 'Jewish' nature of chs. 1-11, but this is precisely what one would expect if Paul was wanting to remind gentile Christians of their relationship to Jews (for this point, see below). Mason also argues that *euaggelion* is not connected to the readers because they did not accept his gospel, and that he was writing to convince them of it. Again, this is unconvincing.

¹⁴⁸ See, for instance, T. W. Manson, "St. Paul's Letter to the Romans," 3-15. Manson argues that Paul added chapter 16 as a 'covering note' when he sent chapter 1-15, originally composed for the Romans, to Ephesus.

¹⁴⁹ Harry Gamble, *The Textual History of the Letter to the Romans: A Study in Textual and Literary Criticism*, SD, ed. Irving Alan Sparks et al. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1977). Gamble's work convincingly accounts for the existence of the other MSS of Romans as well. He does, however, believe that the doxology at the end of Romans, 16:25-27, is a later addition, originally added to the shorter form of the text as a conclusion (123-124). Hurtado criticises Gamble's handling of this issue and concludes that the authenticity of this text remains an open question, Larry W. Hurtado, "The Doxology at the End of Romans (Rom 16:25-27)," in *New Testament Textual Criticism: Its Significance for Exegesis. Essays in Honor of Bruce M. Metzger*, ed. Eldon Jay Epp and Gordon Fee, (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1981), 185-199.

¹⁵⁰ Peter Lampe, *Die Stadtrömischen Christen in den ersten beiden Jahrhunderten*, WUNT, ed. Martin Hengel and Otfried Hofius (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Peter Siebeck), 1987, 124-35; Peter Lampe, "The Roman Christians of Romans 16," in *The Romans Debate: Revised and Expanded Edition*, ed. Karl P. Donfried (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997), 216-30. The latter article is essentially a reworking into English of the section from his book. The most significant contribution of Lampe's work, in my view, is his demonstration that a number of terms and phrases exist in chapter 16 which are similar or identical to those from chapters 1-15, but which are underrepresented in the other Pauline letters, *Christen*, 131-135. An example is the use of 'συγγενής' in 16:7, 11, 21 and 9:3, and 'ἐκλεκτός' in 16:13 and 8:33, which both only occur within the book of Romans.

¹⁵¹ Gamble, *Textual*, 47-49; Lampe, *Christen*, 126-28.

from the east and had immigrated to Rome. Further, more than twenty of the twenty-six names mentioned (although twenty-eight people are actually referred to) were probably gentiles.¹⁵²

Although the gentile-Christians formed a majority, there were also Jewish believers within the churches of Rome. As well as the five identifiably Jewish names in Rom 16,¹⁵³ the explicit address to gentiles in 11:13, 'Now I am speaking to you Gentiles,' confirms a body of Jewish Christians within the congregation, otherwise the address would be redundant. Other references within Romans indicate Jewish presence, including 15:7-13 where Paul exhorts both groups to accept each other.¹⁵⁴ Further, the 'weak' of 14-15 reflects a dispute over Jewish law-observance and, although gentiles who adhered to Jewish traditions could fit this description, it is likely that some Jews made up this group as Paul explicitly connects this issue with Jew-Gentile relationships in 15:7-13.¹⁵⁵

The expulsion of Jews under Claudius (probably because of disturbances over Christianity),¹⁵⁶ and their subsequent return under Nero, was also likely to have caused problems between the gentile Christians and the returning Jewish Christians. This event will be discussed in the following chapter but here it suffices to point out that the gentile Christians who had remained in Rome had to readjust when the Jewish Christians returned. This helped create the situation of tension between gentile Christians and Jewish Christians which Paul hoped to address.

¹⁵² Lampe, *Christen*, 58. Lampe also discusses the probable social status of members indicated by the names (*Christen*, 135-153). See also the discussion in Jeffers, *Conflict at Rome*, 18-20.

¹⁵³ Prisca, Aquila, Andronicus, Junius and Herodian.

¹⁵⁴ Some references to Jews have rightly been characterised as rhetorical (2:17, 24) but is likely that real Jews also lay behind these passages.

¹⁵⁵ Lampe, *Christen*, 56-57. Stowers criticises 'the assumption of a Jewish Christian element in the audience,' (29), arguing that the Jews are not found in the 'explicitly encoded audience' and are seen as a section of the readers for dogmatic reasons. Although he acknowledges the presence of Jewish Christians in Rom 16, he argues that they are greeted and not addressed in the letter. Stanley K. Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans: Justice, Jews, and Gentiles* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1994), 29-33. Both groups, however, are addressed in chaps. 14 – 15, where Paul encourages them to welcome one another (14:1-4; 15:7), although, admittedly, the emphasis is on the strong accepting the weak. See below for the ethnic identity of the 'weak' and the 'strong' Christians.

¹⁵⁶ Four sources are primary in reconstructing this event: Suet *Claud.* 24.4; Acts 18:2; Cassius Dio 60, 6, 6; Orosius *Hist.* 6, 6, 15f.

The opening and closing of the letter also include hints that Rom is written to *correct* gentile attitudes towards the Jews.¹⁵⁷ The opening in Romans consists of the salutation (1:1-7) and thanksgiving (1:8-17). Although vv. 16-17 are in some respects the 'theme' of the epistle they are also functionally the climax of the thanksgiving and so will be included within our analysis.¹⁵⁸

Paul speaks in his preface as a faithful Jew who believed that the Messiah had arrived in fulfilment of God's promises to the Jews (1:2). In so doing, he emphasised that his apostleship was in full continuity with God's revelation in the past, thus correcting gentile Christian dismissal of the Jews. Paul then turns to a contrast between Christ 'according to the flesh' (κατὰ σάρκα) and Christ 'according to the Spirit' (κατὰ πνεῦμα) (1:3-4). Some commentators interpret κατὰ σάρκα negatively, i.e., emphasising the limits of nationalistic boundaries, so that Christ κατὰ πνεῦμα transcends these limits.¹⁵⁹ This 'negative reading' of κατὰ σάρκα, however, is unnecessary. All that the phrase connotes here is that in so far as Christ's human nature is concerned, he is from the seed of David.¹⁶⁰ Christ κατὰ πνεῦμα in no way undermines the significance of Christ κατὰ σάρκα. In fact, part of Paul's argument in Romans is precisely that it is through the obedience of Jesus as the Messiah faithful to God that salvation comes to the gentiles. Christ's life κατὰ σάρκα leads to his life κατὰ πνεῦμα.¹⁶¹ By connecting Christ's resurrection with

¹⁵⁷ The opening of the letter is significant because it is the place where Paul frequently signals the purpose of his letters. The qualifications within the opening salutation can anticipate the later argument, as in Galatians where the description of Paul's gospel as 'from God and not from man' is really the theme of the letter as a whole. See John L. White, "New Testament Epistolary Literature in the Framework of Ancient Epistolography," *ANRW*, 1984, II. 25. 2, 1740-41. The thanksgivings are even more important for signalling the theme of Paul's letters as they often 'indicate the occasion for and the contents of the letter which they introduce.' Paul Schubert, *Form and Function of the Pauline Thanksgivings*, BZNW, ed. D. Hans Lietzmann, (Berlin: Berlag von Alfred Toepelmann, 1939), 26-27.

¹⁵⁸ Schubert, *Form*, 31-33.

¹⁵⁹ James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, WBC, ed. Ralph P. Martin, (Dallas, Texas: Word Books, 1988), 13.

¹⁶⁰ Cranfield *Romans I*, 59-60.

¹⁶¹ L. W. Hurtado, also rejecting the negative reading of *kata sarka*, has described the relationship between these two phrases as climactic or progressive parallelism; L. W. Hurtado, "Jesus' Divine Sonship in Paul's Epistle to the Romans," in *Romans and the People of God: Essays in Honor of Gordon D. Fee on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday*, ed. Sven K. Soderlund and N.T. Wright, 217-233 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999), 225-227.

his earthly life, Paul indicates the importance of his earthly, Jewish life, and counters gentile Christian hostility to Jewish believers.¹⁶²

In the climax of the thanksgiving (1:16-17), Paul also indicates the importance of the Jewish roots of the Gospel. He introduces the theme of the 'righteousness of God', central through the letter (δικαιοσύνη γὰρ θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ ἀποκαλύπτεται). The 'righteousness of God' was a notion broad enough to encompass God's faithfulness towards Israel, as well as actions in the present.¹⁶³ Paul unfolds this theme because by denigrating the Jewish Christians among them, the Gentile Christians implicitly deny that God had been faithful to his promises to Israel. Paul sought to show that God continues to be faithful to his chosen people, as well as to his promise that the gentiles would be blessed in Abraham. Hays has also discussed the cluster of echoes lying behind these two verses and argues that 'I am not ashamed' recalls lament psalms and exilic prophecies which respond to the charge that God is unfaithful (Ps 43:10; 24:2; Isa 28:16; 50:7-8).¹⁶⁴ The prophet is unashamed because he knows that God's vindication is near, while Paul is unashamed because he knows that the promises to Israel have been and are being fulfilled. Paul also introduces in this text the priority of the Jew over the gentile: the Gospel is God's salvific power, 'to the Jew first and also to the Greek'. This priority seems to be temporal rather than salvific and is reiterated in chapter two (vv. 9-10). Even though the Jews come first, this need not imply that God is partial, a conclusion which Paul denies in 2:11 (significantly after stating the temporal priority of the Jew). Nevertheless, it is significant that Paul mentions this temporal priority to remind the gentile Christians of the roots of their faith in Judaism (cf., 11:17-24 on gentiles 'grafted in' to the Jewish people).¹⁶⁵

¹⁶² Dunn argues that the purpose of this parenthesis is to 'demonstrate his "good faith" and to deflect any suspicion or criticism from the start.' Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 5.

¹⁶³ See chap. 2 for a discussion of the apocalyptic nuance of this theme.

¹⁶⁴ Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1989), 36-39.

¹⁶⁵ Douglas Campbell argues that Paul quotes the phrase 'Jew first and then Greek' because it was used by his opponents, and that Paul quotes it only to undermine it throughout his argument; Campbell, "Determining the Gospel," 332-335. Campbell's claim is part of his larger argument in which he tries to establish that Paul's purpose in Romans is to attack the Jewish Christian theology which he believes will soon reach Rome through his opponents (picking up the earlier analysis of the Tübingen school). Although it is true that Paul undermines certain 'priorities of the Jews', however, it

The acknowledgement of Jesus' Davidic descent in the opening verses of Romans, the description of the Gospel 'for the Jew first, and then the Gentiles,' and the intertextual echoes lying behind these climactic verses suggest that Paul wants to affirm the Judaic heritage of Christianity. Paul's affirmation of this Jewish background is best understood as refuting gentile believers who looked down upon their Jewish brethren.

This perspective on Paul's purpose in Romans also makes sense of particular sections of the letter. Paul's argument in 11:13-32 explicitly addresses Gentiles who risk becoming 'overly wise' in their rejection of Jews. Whereas former scholars regarded these chapters as a simple appendix or abstract meditation on divine providence, chapters 9 – 11 are increasingly recognised by scholars as climactic within Paul's letter.¹⁶⁶ Paul addresses the issue of God's faithfulness to Israel because the Gentile Christians to whom he wrote claimed God had forsaken Israel. The righteousness of God and his faithfulness to Israel are central. As Walters puts it, 'Paul uses the fundamental conviction of God's faithfulness as rhetorical leverage against those who would doubt the continuing priority of the Jews.'¹⁶⁷ Realising God's mercy, Gentile-Christians have no right to boast over the Jews. If Paul was addressing Judaizers then such an argument seems misplaced, and could even endanger his case. The climax of Romans 9 – 11, in which Paul reveals the 'mystery' that 'all Israel' will be saved (11:25ff.), fits well into our reading of Romans. Paul affirms that God has not forsaken Israel in order to undermine the gentile-Christian arrogance that Israel no longer matters.¹⁶⁸

is clear that he retains a respect for their temporal priority (9:1-5; 11:17-24). Further, the much more positive account in Rom towards Judaism (esp. the Law) than in Galatians suggests that the problem faced there was different than that addressed in Galatians.

¹⁶⁶ John Ziesler, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, TPI NT Commentaries, ed., Howard Clark Kee and Dennis Nineham (London: SCM Press, 1989), 37-39; E. Elizabeth Johnson, *The Function of Apocalyptic and Wisdom Traditions in Romans 9-11*, SBLDS, ed., Charles Talbert (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1989), 116-123; E. Elizabeth Johnson, "Romans 9-11: The Faithfulness and Impartiality of God," in *Pauline Theology, Volume III: Romans*, ed., David M. Hay and E. Elizabeth Johnson (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 116-123; Walters, *Ethnic Issues*, 79-81. Hays, *Echoes*, 63-64. As Hays puts it, 'This is not some excursus or appendix peripheral to the letter's theme; it is the heart of the matter, around which scriptural echoes have rumbled since Rom. 1:16-17', 63.

¹⁶⁷ Walters, *Ethnic Issues*, 81.

¹⁶⁸ Mark Nanos believes that in Rom 9 – 11 Paul is calling for an end to Gentile-Christian superiority over non-Christian Jews and that this implies that the salvation of Israel can occur independently of

This proposal also takes seriously the conflict between weak and strong Christians in Rome (14:1 – 15:13), one of the few areas which we can be sure of. Although the identity of the ‘weak’ and ‘strong’ Christians continues to be debated, the most likely explanation is that the ‘strong’ are predominantly gentile Christians and that the ‘weak’ are predominantly Jewish Christians.¹⁶⁹ Although Paul refers to the weak as abstaining from meat and wine, he addresses the particular context of when believers come together, rather than giving a general description of the weak. The ‘weak’ believers had purity issues with food present at the common table and so Paul describes them in such terms.¹⁷⁰ This identification is also supported by the final subsection, 15:7-13, which clearly speaks of Jews and Gentiles.¹⁷¹ Clearly, internal disunity existed among the Christians in Rome. The ‘strong’ are those who have accepted Paul’s law-free gospel, and the ‘weak’ are Christians who continue to accept the cultural ‘boundary markers’ of Judaism. Although Paul sides with the ‘strong’ in the matters of faith, he also rebukes the ‘strong’ for their insensitivity and admonishes them to ‘welcome those who are weak in faith’ (14:1f).

The greatest problem with this interpretation of Paul’s purpose in Romans is the extent of the ‘dialogue with the Jew’ throughout the letter, which has led some

their acceptance of the Messiah; Nanos, *Mystery of Romans*, 239-288. Räisänen, however, has argued (in response to a thesis of Gager) that this is highly unlikely. Rather, in 11:25-36, Paul expresses his assurance that a miracle at the imminent eschaton will convert Israel to faith in Christ.’ Heikki Räisänen, “Paul, God, and Israel: Romans 9-11 in Recent Research,” in *The Social World of Formative Christianity and Judaism: Essays in Tribute to Howard Clark Kee*, ed. Jacob Neusner *et al.*, 178-206, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 191-92.

¹⁶⁹ See Cranfield, *Romans II*, 690-97; James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, WBC, ed. Ralph P. Martin (Dallas, Texas: Word Books, 1988), 810-812; Mark Reasoner, “The Theology of Romans 12:1-15:13,” in *Pauline Theology, Volume III: Romans*, ed. David M. Hay and E. Elizabeth Johnson (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 297-298; Campbell, “Rule”, 268-278; John M. G. Barclay, “Do we undermine the Law? A Study of Romans 14:1 - 15:16,” in *Paul and the Mosaic Law: The Third Durham-Tübingen Symposium on Earliest Christianity and Judaism (Durham, September, 1994)*, ed. James D. G. Dunn, 287-308 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001), 289-293. Wedderburn points out that the issue was food and drink, rather than circumcision, which suggests a more moderating form of Judaizing Christianity than in Galatia, *Reasons*, 61. Sampley doubts whether the strong and weak represent gentiles and Jews respectively and argues that Paul was deliberately, and rhetorically, oblique. However, the final subsection makes it likely that these groups of Christians were in mind.

¹⁷⁰ Barclay, “Do we undermine the Law?” 291-292. Others appeal to instances where Jews adopt vegetarianism in pagan settings (cf., Dan 1:12, 16); Wedderburn, *Reasons*, 34.

¹⁷¹ Lampe, *Christen*, 56-57.

interpreters to propose that Paul's debate is really with Christian Judaizers.¹⁷² Paul's 'opponent' in many of his arguments seems to be the pious and faithful Jew, rather than the arrogant gentile. Recognition of the rhetorical dimensions of the letter and the function of the diatribe, however, makes it unnecessary to posit Judaizers among the congregations. The best explanation for the extent of the diatribe material is that Paul attempted to endorse much of the gentile Christian perspective in Rome, and also to sketch his own understanding, before, as it were, pulling out the theological rug from under his readers. The number of Jewish themes within the letter actually supports our argument, and particularly when we contrast this with Paul's more negative comments in Galatians. Paul wrote more negatively about the Torah in Galatians (Gal 3:19-20) because he addressed there an audience all too willing to embrace it, whereas in Romans, he addresses an audience all too eager to denigrate it.

Paul wrote Romans as an apology for the righteousness of God which was intended to undermine gentile Christian disdain for Jewish Christians in Rome. In so doing, he hoped to create a unified community which would ensure a secure base for his future mission to the West. Romans, then, is addressed to a specific situation. It is not a theological tractate, nor a political one. The situation at Rome, however, elicited a response which sketched God's plan for the world in broad contours. In defending God's faithfulness to his covenant, both for the Jews and the Gentiles, Paul dealt with issues which embraced all of humanity. What is sin? What has God done in Jesus? Who are the true people of God? The universal scope of Paul's argument is indicated in the material he draws into his argument; nothing less than the 'righteousness of God' is dealt with, an issue which traverses anthropology, theology, Christology, and ethics. The 'universal' claims made by Paul infringed on the civic sphere, conflicting with Roman answers to the questions advanced by Paul. Paul's argument traversed the political realm as well as the theological one. Romans

¹⁷² Stuhlmacher, "Purpose," 238-240; Campbell, "Determining the Gospel". For a radical rereading of Romans, which takes account of the rhetorical and cultural conventions of the time, see Stowers, *Rereading of Romans*, 1-82. Stowers argues that the letter must be read in terms of 'speech-in-character' and the diatribe, as well as the ancient ethic of self-mastery. For Stowers, Romans is not about the salvation provided by God's redemptive act in Christ, but rather the letter attempts to convince gentiles that self-mastery is possible through Christ. Stowers work deserves fuller assessment than is possible here. For initial assessments, see the reviews by John M. G. Barclay, in *JTS* 46 (1994): 646-651, and by Jouette M. Bassler, in *JBL* 115 (1996): 365-368.

adopts an eschatological plot in which Christ was central, and so challenged political and religious perceptions of the surrounding environment.

As well as the universality of Paul's argument in Romans, Paul's emphasis on the Jewish roots of the gospel contributes to the political features of the letter. As we shall see in the following chapter, Paul's inheritance of a Jewish apocalyptic eschatology was a conduit for political ideas in his theology. Paul's gospel was not the proclamation of another mystery religion, in which personal experience and piety was central, but a Jewish gospel which related faith to public life. Thus, the situation which provoked Paul's letter to the Romans, a dejudaization of Christian faith, led to a stress on the Jewish roots of the Gospel which at the same time drew on political features from these roots.

Conclusion

This introduction to the thesis has surveyed previous interpretations of Romans 13:1-7 and has suggested an alternative approach which pays attention to political motifs throughout Romans as the contextual background to Paul's instructions in Romans 13:1-7. The particular contexts deemed central in this thesis are Paul's apocalyptic perspective and its conflict with Roman imperial ideology.

The following chapter situates Romans within three political contexts, of apocalyptic eschatology, Roman imperial ideology, and the house church community at Rome. Jewish apocalyptic eschatology was, we shall argue, a political phenomenon and formed a central background for Paul's interpretation of the Christ event. It also existed in tension with Roman imperial ideology, which legitimised the empire questioned by apocalyptic. Meeting in house churches separate from synagogues, the early Christians were also politically vulnerable as an emerging religious group. The expulsion of Jews by Claudius in 49 CE was also significant for believers in Rome, as was the broader Roman suspicion of new religious movements.

Chapter three studies the motif of judgment in apocalyptic eschatology and its presence in Romans. A strong theme throughout the apocalyptic literature was God's judgment and destruction of the reigning powers. Although Paul's own apocalyptic brand of thought does not explicitly renounce political authorities, Paul draws on the apocalyptic theme of judgment and is heir to its political dimensions. He highlights the ubiquity of sin and its cosmological dimension, broadening the scope of judgment rather than narrowing it. The motif of apocalyptic judgment conflicted with

the perspective of Roman imperial ideology, in which the empire was seen as permanent and complete.

Chapter four argues that the figure of Christ as redeemer is interpreted and framed within a political apocalyptic context. Although apocalyptic eschatology did not always involve redeemer figures, it provided the raw material from which Paul fashioned his interpretation of the Christ event. The figure of Christ conflicted with the figure of the emperor in Roman imperial ideology, who is represented in quasi-divine terms.

Chapter five discusses the way in which Paul connects eschatological life with the community of Christ in Romans. Although apocalyptic eschatology was characteristically reticent in describing the future *eschaton* in detail, it clearly saw it as a time in which God would rule as sovereign over all of creation. Paul connected aspects of the eschatological period with the present, and saw in the community of Christ the locus for God's eschatological activity (specifically in the Spirit). The depiction of the community of Christ as participating in God's coming kingdom conflicted with Roman imperial ideology, in which the emperor brought peace and salvation to the residents of his empire.

Chapter six connects the political motifs throughout Romans with Romans 13:1-7. Paul wrote to encourage Christians to continually acknowledge the 'powers that be' as appointed by God. In this way, he hoped to alleviate the implicit tension between the Gospel and the state, and showed that the state differs from the coming community established in Christ. The broader context of the passage is important because it shows that in many ways the church *did* represent an alternative political community. Within the broader context of Romans 13:1-7, Paul sought to avoid two possible misunderstandings. On the one hand, he refused to claim that members of the Christian community were free from obedience to Rome. On the other hand, he denied that subordination to Roman rulers invalidated the earthly 'political' character of the Gospel. Christians are also to live as a new community, under a new ruler, awaiting a new world, but without denying limited obedience to the old 'rulers,' who were soon to pass away.

Chapter seven concludes the thesis, summarising its contributions and suggesting future avenues of research. As well as working towards a solution to the question of what led Paul to write the passage, this thesis contributes to an understanding of

Christianity at the time of Paul. The implicit tension between the gospel and the empire is recognised by Paul, who refuses to collapse political elements of the coming of God's kingdom into a dematerialised 'spiritual' dimension. The gospel impacts public life as well as private piety.

CHAPTER TWO: THE POLITICAL CONTEXTS OF ROMANS

Romans is obviously a 'religious' text. Like other classic religious texts of humanity, it deals with the relationship between the human and the divine, and, like the other books of the New Testament, it views the coming of Jesus as of vital significance for this relationship. As well as a religious text, however, Romans included political notions connected with the religious ideas developed by Paul. Paul wrote this letter in a society which blurred the boundaries between religious assertions and political claims. In such a society, talk of God could easily be correlated with talk of earthly sovereignty and its legitimacy, or lack of it. Among the Jews, apocalyptic eschatology used vivid metaphorical language to assert political claims for God's coming kingdom, while, in the Roman Empire, imperial ideology sanctified the present order and announced the emperor as Lord over the inhabitants of the ancient world. Paul wrote Romans to the vulnerable Christians in Rome, increasingly at risk as they moved beyond the parameters of the Jewish community. He articulated his gospel in apocalyptic terms which involved motifs that conflicted with Romans imperial ideology. These contexts form the background to the political motifs found in Romans.¹

The first section of this chapter discusses apocalyptic eschatology and its importance in Romans. Jewish apocalyptic eschatology was a political as well as religious phenomenon. Its disjunctive eschatology, in which God's future is represented as a break with the sinful present, involved political assertions, including the claim that the coming kingdom nullifies and conquers present kingdoms (Dan 7:27; *1 Enoch* 46; 91:9; 4 Ezra 11:40-46; 2 *Baruch* 13:11-12). Drawing on heavily symbolic language, apocalyptic eschatology challenged the grandiose claims of foreign rulers by placing them within God's plan and a future judgment in which they would find themselves on the side of the losers. The political features of Jewish apocalyptic eschatology meant that it was also a likely catalyst and support for various movements of Jewish resistance.² Paul's own theology developed within an apocalyptic context, although significantly modified by the Christ event. Romans shares in Paul's adoption and adaptation of apocalyptic eschatology.

¹ Supporting evidence is provided throughout this chapter.

² Jos. *BJ* 2, 55-65; 6, 312-313. See our later discussion.

The second section of this chapter involves a study of the civic context of Romans. Paul wrote his letter to Rome, where the small Christian community was moving away from the synagogue. Roman imperial ideology, in which the emperor was depicted as close to the gods, was central within the city. Roman Christians would have daily encounters with claims that the emperor was close to the gods. The city of Rome was also a place in which conflict took place between rulers and ruled. This conflict included the Claudius edict of 49 CE, which expelled Jews from the city and so accelerated the separation of gentile Christians from Jewish Christians and the Jewish community at large. Jews returned from expulsion to find an increasingly independent gentile Christianity. As it separated from the Jewish community, gentile Christianity became vulnerable to state repression as a new foreign religious movement, lacking the protection afforded by existence in the synagogues.

Apocalyptic Eschatology as Background to Romans

Apocalyptic eschatology constructed a world in which the present was undeniably sick and God's future was about to change it.³ In its radical renunciation of the present (*Jub.* 23:11-12; *1 Enoch* 1:1; *T. Levi* 4:1ff.; *4 Ezra* 14:16-18), its announcement of judgment (*Dan* 7:21-22; *1 Enoch* 90:17; 91:5-9; *T. Levi* 3:1-3), and its vision of God's coming reign (*1 Enoch* 90:28-36; *2 Baruch* 44:11-15), in short, in its disjunctive eschatology, apocalyptic presented a challenge to foreign rule. The challenge was first and foremost an ideological one, a fight for loyalty to an alternative reality ruled by God. Precisely because of its critique of foreign rule, however, apocalyptic eschatology moved beyond the ideological level and fuelled the passions of Jews who revolted against foreign rule. Apocalyptic fervour was a probable influence on several enemies of Rome. Paul's theology inherited the disjunctive eschatology found within apocalyptic eschatology, which became the source of political motifs in his letter to the Romans.

³ The following argument provides evidence for this assertion.

Jewish Apocalyptic Eschatology

Texts and Traits

Keck's observation that, "'apocalyptic' may be the most misused word in the scholar's vocabulary",⁴ makes it important to define the way we are using the term, and others with which it is associated. Part of the reason for the misuse of 'apocalyptic' which Keck refers to is that various aspects of this phenomenon are frequently grouped, and often (con)fused, under the broader term. As well as 'apocalyptic', scholars refer to 'apocalypses,' 'apocalyptic eschatology,' and 'apocalypticism'.⁵ For the sake of clarity and accuracy, it is useful to define these terms separately.

'Apocalyptic,' first of all, refers to a particular genre of literature, the 'apocalypses.' In collaboration with the SBL Apocalypse group, Collins defined fifteen texts as apocalypses.⁶ The texts identified conform to the following definition;

*"Apocalypse" is a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial insofar as it involves another, supernatural world.*⁷

Although some scholars have debated which works are truly apocalypses, this definition, and the works which Collins finds conform to it, have been endorsed by later scholars.⁸ Collins also develops a distinction between historical apocalypses,

⁴ Leander E. Keck, "Paul and Apocalyptic Theology," *Int* 38 (1984), 230.

⁵ The following distinction was formulated by Paul D. Hanson, "Apocalypticism", *IDBSup*, 1976, 28-32 (esp. 29-31).

⁶ J. Collins, "Introduction: Towards the Morphology of a Genre," *Semeia* 14 (1979), 1-20. For Collins' discussion of the texts, see John J. Collins, "The Jewish Apocalypses," *Semeia* 14 (1979), 21-59.

⁷ Collins, "Introduction," 9.

⁸ Stephen L. Cook, *Prophecy and Apocalypticism: The Postexilic Social Setting* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 22-25; Johnson, *Apocalyptic and Wisdom Traditions*, 6-7. Though see Christopher Rowland's disagreement, in *The Open Heaven: A Study of Apocalyptic in Judaism and Early Christianity* (London: SPCK, 1982), 14-22. In a later article, however, Collins admits that it is better to speak of 'dominant genres' of specific works rather than define sections of works as apocalypses; John J. Collins, "Genre, Ideology and Social Movements in Jewish Apocalypticism," in *Mysteries and Revelations: Apocalyptic Studies since the Uppsala Colloquium*, JSPSup, ed. John J. Collins and James H. Charlesworth (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), 13-14.

which emphasise the horizontal dimension of the heavenly revelation, and apocalypses of ascent, which stress the vertical dimension.⁹

Whereas ‘apocalyptic’ and ‘apocalypse’ denote a literary genre of ancient texts, ‘apocalyptic eschatology’ refers to the world of thought distinctive of this literature, as well as to the motifs and ideas found within this worldview. As the nomenclature suggests, the eschatological perspective embodied in ‘apocalyptic eschatology’ is its distinctive and crucial feature.¹⁰ Apocalyptic eschatology can be defined as a mode and matrix of thought that focuses on God’s future and eternal vindication of his people. In so doing, it involved a story-line of God’s end-time activity: following a time of sin, God condemns sinners, vindicates the righteous, and inaugurates an era of salvation.¹¹ Although not every form of eschatology is apocalyptic, apocalyptic eschatology is distinguished from other forms of eschatology by the motifs which cluster around it, including its dualistic framework, its emphasis on revelation, and the ‘political’ motifs we will examine throughout this thesis. Thus, Vielhauer defines apocalyptic (in the sense we are using ‘apocalyptic eschatology’) as, ‘a special expression of Jewish eschatology.’¹²

Although apocalyptic eschatology is found primarily in the apocalypses, it is also reflected in other texts. The broader category of ‘apocalyptic literature’ refers to texts which inhabit the world of apocalyptic eschatology, but which do not fit Collins’ definition of ‘apocalypses’. ‘Apocalyptic literature’ is far broader than

⁹ Stone also distinguishes between the ‘eschatological’ apocalypses and the ‘speculative’ apocalypses; Michael E. Stone, “Apocalyptic Literature,” in *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period: Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Qumran Sectarian Writings, Philo, Josephus*, CRINT, ed. Michael E. Stone, 383-441 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 383-384. Collins distinguishes three further subtypes within the apocalypses of ascent: works which simply review history, works which involve cosmic and/or political eschatology and those which only include personal eschatology; John J. Collins *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to the Jewish Matrix of Christianity* (New York: Crossroad, 1987), 5-6; “Jewish Apocalypses,” 22-23. In a later article, however, Collins sees these three subtypes as less important, though still maintaining the distinction between historical works and works of ascent; “Genre, Ideology and Social Movements,” 13-14.

¹⁰ Philipp Vielhauer and George Strecker ‘Introduction to Apocalypses and Related Subjects,’ in *New Testament Apocrypha II*, rev. ed., ed. William Scheemelcher (Cambridge: James Clark & Co; Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), 549-555; D. S. Russell, *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic, 200 BC - AD 100*, OTL, ed. G. Ernest Wright et al. (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1964), 264-267; Klaus Koch, *The Rediscovery of Apocalyptic: A polemical work on a neglected area of biblical studies and its damaging effects on theology and philosophy*, SBT, ed. Peter Ackroyd et al. (London: SCM Press, 1972), 28-33.

¹¹ For a more detailed discussion of this ‘story-line’, see below.

¹² Vielhauer, “Introduction to Apocalypses,” 549.

‘apocalyptic’.¹³ Thus, texts from Qumran include apocalyptic literature.¹⁴ The letters of Paul, as I will argue below, also fall within this broader definition.

Christopher Rowland has challenged the view that eschatology is an essential element of the apocalyptic world-view, arguing that the importance of eschatology to apocalyptic has been overemphasised.¹⁵ Rather, apocalyptic, ‘is concerned with knowledge of God and the secrets of the world above, revealed in a direct way by dreams, visions or angelic pronouncements.’¹⁶ The revelatory function of apocalyptic, as disclosing the secrets of God, is what is crucial. Although Rowland’s work is a helpful reminder of the importance of revelation and disclosure in apocalyptic (elements particularly prominent in the apocalypses of ascent), eschatology is a part of all the apocalypses. As Collins notes, ‘All the apocalypses... involve a transcendent eschatology that looks for retribution beyond the bounds of history.’¹⁷ Although there are differing eschatological schemas within the apocalyptic works, there are also common features. Further, although such an eschatological view is not unique to the apocalypses, it is characteristic of it.¹⁸

Barry Matlock, in his study of the use of ‘apocalyptic’ by Paul’s interpreters, argues that ‘apocalyptic eschatology’ is an unhelpful and misleading category.¹⁹ Appealing to this construct often takes the place of serious engagement with the apocalypses themselves and is frequently imposed on the various apocalyptic works, rather than reflecting their common world view.²⁰ If apocalyptic eschatology is broader than the

¹³ Cook, *Prophecy*, 22-25.

¹⁴ Collins *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 115-141; For a survey of apocalyptic themes in Qumran, see Florentino Garcia Martinez, “Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism*, vol. 1, *The Origins of Apocalypticism in Judaism and Christianity*, ed. John J. Collins (New York / London: Continuum, 2000), 162-192.

¹⁵ Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 23-29.

¹⁶ Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 9-10.

¹⁷ Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 9. See also Collins, “Genre, Ideology and Social Movements,” 15-17.

¹⁸ Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 9. For a critique of Rowland’s view of Jewish apocalypses, see Paul L. Owen, “Jewish Eschatology as a Matrix for Understanding the Death of Jesus in Early Christianity,” (PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2000), 54-80; M. C. de Boer, “Paul and Apocalyptic Eschatology,” *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism*, vol. 1, *The Origins of Apocalypticism in Judaism and Christianity*, ed., John J. Collins, 344-383 (New York/London: Continuum, 2000), 351-354.

¹⁹ R. Barry Matlock, *Unveiling the Apocalyptic Paul: Paul's Interpreters and the Rhetoric of Criticism*, JSNTSup, ed. Stanley E. Porter (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 247-316.

²⁰ Matlock, *Unveiling*, 270-299.

apocalypses (e.g., also found in Qumran etc.), then the usefulness of the phrase becomes problematic. Matlock claims that the tenuous connection of 'apocalyptic eschatology' with the apocalypses themselves allows exegetes leeway to interpret the phrase according to their own hermeneutical perspective.²¹ He also questions the use of defining the 'essence' of apocalyptic. As he puts it,

A hurried move from the literature to some 'essence' is a flight from the texts as *texts*. Although, apparently, 'apocalyptic' is real enough for many, for most the apocalyptic literature would still seem to qualify as the most tangible entity we have, possessing by this right some prior claim as itself having something to say on the matter of 'apocalyptic'.²²

Matlock's work is a critique of interpreters of Paul, their use of apocalyptic eschatology, and, finally, a criticism of the 'objectivism' he finds in biblical studies.

Matlock's concern with the move from literature to abstraction is clearly relevant, but his rejection of 'apocalyptic eschatology' is unnecessarily drastic.²³ His critique relies on Rowland's argument against the centrality of eschatology within the apocalypses, but he also criticises Rowland for working with abstractions.²⁴ Matlock finds all appeals to 'essences' problematic (including e.g., wisdom and prophecy), arguing that they cover up the diversity of material and remove texts from their historical contexts to form the background for some abstraction.²⁵

The move from 'apocalypses' to 'apocalyptic eschatology', however, is less arbitrary than Matlock suggests. 'Apocalyptic eschatology' is a useful concept because it marks out a world-view which shares elements found in the apocalypses, and which also appears in other literature. Taking seriously the 'historicity' of texts, which Matlock is ostensibly eager to do, involves accounting for the relationships between them. Abstractions are useful precisely when they recognise that these relationships exist. 'Apocalyptic eschatology' remains a helpful construct because it refers to a distinctive mode of thought which finds its primary representation in the apocalypses. Admittedly, the 'apocalypses of ascent' ('speculative apocalypses') lack the focus on eschatology characteristic of the 'historical works' ('eschatological

²¹ Matlock, *Unveiling*, 270-273.

²² Matlock, *Unveiling*, 288

²³ For criticisms of Matlock, see Owen, "Jewish Eschatology," 43-54.

²⁴ Matlock, *Unveiling*, 277-288.

²⁵ Matlock, *Unveiling*, 277-291.



apocalypses'). Even the former type, however, contains allusions to the redemptive narrative found within apocalyptic eschatology.²⁶

'Apocalypticism', a further term in the specialist's vocabulary, refers to the social movements and context within which this literature was produced.²⁷ Conventionally, interpreters argued that apocalyptic literature was produced by marginalized and socially deprived groups. Often this assessment begins with the observation that Daniel, the first apocalyptic work, was written among and for a persecuted community.²⁸ Scholars have applied a similar model to other works, including the so-called proto-apocalyptic texts of the Hebrew Bible.²⁹ Recently, Cook has claimed that a complete reversal of this position is necessary, showing that several of the proto-apocalyptic texts (Ezek; Zech 1-8; Joel 2:1-11; 3-4) were in fact produced to support an already powerful priestly group.³⁰ Several of the exegetes who argue for a context of marginalisation among apocalyptic groups relied on sociological studies which linked millennial communities to social or relative deprivation.³¹ Cook shows the inadequacies of this social theory and points to numerous examples of millennial groups throughout history which have arisen in affluent communities.³² Collins also warns of the 'tendency to assume that the setting of one or two well-known apocalypses is representative of the whole genre.'³³

²⁶ The *Book of Watchers*, for instance, although a 'speculative apocalypse,' includes references to God's judgment (1 Enoch 1:3-9; 22). VanderKam also notes that, 'disclosures about noneschatological subjects (e.g., about the heavens) are often if not always connected in some way with eschatological matters,' James C. VanderKam, "Messianism and Apocalypticism," *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism*, vol. 1, *The Origins of Apocalypticism in Judaism and Christianity*, John J. Collins, 193-228 (New York / London: Continuum, 2000), 196.

²⁷ Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 2. Stone uses it to refer to what we have labelled 'apocalyptic eschatology'; Stone, "Apocalyptic Literature", 392-394.

²⁸ H. H. Rowley, *The Relevance of Apocalyptic: A Study of Jewish and Christian Apocalypses from Daniel to the Revelation* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1944), 39-48; Horsley, *Bandits, Prophets, and Messiahs*, 16-20.

²⁹ Both Plöger and Hanson have argued that such texts arose in post-exilic struggles over the control of Jewish affairs, and were written by the marginalised groups in such struggles; Otto Plöger, *Theocracy and Eschatology* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1968); Paul D. Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975).

³⁰ See chapters four to eight of Cook, *Prophecy*.

³¹ Hanson draws on the work of Weber, Mannheim, and Troeltsch, *Dawn*, 211-220.

³² Cook, *Prophecy*, 35-40.

³³ Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 29.

The idea that apocalypticism was a social movement distinct from other Jewish parties is also an unwarranted assumption. It is more likely that the apocalyptic genre and apocalyptic eschatology were utilised by various groups at different stages for different functions.³⁴ Nevertheless, although the specific social sites of apocalyptic works are difficult to determine, their production within the postexilic period meant that they were produced under the reality of foreign rule, as well as the (perceived) misrule of Israel by local rulers. As we shall see below, several resistant groups also adopted apocalyptic eschatology in support of their opposition to foreign rule.

The Politics of Apocalyptic Eschatology

Apocalyptic eschatology was a political world-view as well as a religious perspective. The authors of apocalyptic literature spoke about the revelation of God, but also reflected on the consequences of that revelation for earthly rulers and civic life. We can illustrate the political dimension of apocalyptic eschatology by examining its origins among Jews coping with foreign rule, its disjunctive eschatology, and its social consequences. These political aspects of apocalyptic eschatology were inherited by Paul in shaping his exposition of the gospel.

Despite the difficulties of determining the origins of apocalyptic,³⁵ it is significant that apocalyptic literature originated in the period when Jews lived under foreign rule. Many of the apocalypses were written as specific responses to conflict between Jews and foreign rulers.³⁶ Central apocalyptic texts emerged around the time of the Maccabean revolt and the Jewish War.³⁷ Daniel was written (in its final form) at the climax of the Maccabean revolt and supported those persecuted under the

³⁴ Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 29-30; E. P. Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief 63 BCE - 66 CE* (London; Philadelphia: SCM Press; Trinity Press International, 1992), 8-10.

³⁵ Baumgarten describes the question of origin as, 'eine der Hauptfragen der älteren wie der jüngeren Forschung,' Jörg Baumgarten, *Paulus und die Apokalypsik: Die Auslegung apokalyptischer Überlieferungen in den echten Paulusbriefen* (Germany: Neukirchener Verlag, 1975), 34. For a defence of connecting apocalyptic with prophecy, see Hanson, *Dawn*.

³⁶ As Horsley argues, 'The rise of apocalyptic literature was the Judean scribes' creative response to the pressures against the traditional Israelite way of life presented by Western imperialism,' Richard A. Horsley, "The Kingdom of God and the Renewal of Israel: Synoptic Gospels, Jesus Movements, and Apocalypticism," *Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism*, vol. 1, *The Origins of Apocalypticism in Judaism and Christianity*, ed. John J. Collins, 303-304 (New York: Continuum, 1998), 341

³⁷ John J. Collins, "From Prophecy to Apocalypticism: The Expectation of the End," *Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism*, vol. 1, *The Origins of Apocalypticism in Judaism and Christianity*, John J. Collins, 129-161 (New York: Continuum, 2000), 134-157.

Seleucids.³⁸ Sections of *1 Enoch* also came from this period, including the *Book of Dreams* (83-90). The Qumran community also arose in the aftermath of this crisis. The 'righteous teacher' mentioned in the Scrolls was probably a leader in the Hasmonean period, disillusioned with the way that the priests ran the temple and the cult. Following the Jewish War, both 4 Ezra and 2 Baruch attempted to explain why God allowed Jerusalem to fall. Both included sections that protested God's justice in seeming to abandon his people. Thus, 4 Ezra is, 'in a sense, a book of lamentation in which the author complains about the oppressions, sufferings and torments of his people.'³⁹ 2 Baruch also includes significant sections of lament (2 Baruch 9:10 – 12:5). Both these works develop their vision against the backdrop of Roman rule over Palestine.⁴⁰

Even if those who wrote apocalyptic texts were educated scribes, apocalyptic eschatology embodies a perspective 'from below'. As Collins puts it, 'none of the Jewish apocalyptic writings of the Second Temple period reflects the viewpoint of established power. Typically, the appeal for divine intervention is necessitated because the world is believed to be in the grip of hostile powers.'⁴¹ The texts voice protests from a people conscious of their subservience to foreign rulers and nations.

The origins of apocalyptic under foreign rulers make it likely that they were political texts as well as religious ones. Some interpreters, however, have concluded from this context that apocalyptic was an apolitical, powerless form of Judaism. In his reconstruction of its origins, Hanson contrasts a historically-engaged prophetic movement with apocalyptic, which he deems was uninterested and uninvolved in the realm of history. He argues that whereas prophecy maintained the tension between vision and reality, and called for a vocational response towards it, 'the essential nature of apocalyptic is found in the abandonment of the prophetic task of translating

³⁸ For a discussion of the composition and setting of the visions, see John J. Collins, *Daniel: A commentary on the Book of Daniel*, Hermeneia, Frank Moore Cross et al. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 24-38, 61-74. See also the discussion below.

³⁹ Jacob M. Myers, *I and II Esdras: Introduction, Translation and Commentary* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1974), 125

⁴⁰ See Philip F. Esler, "God's Honour and Rome's Triumph: Responses to the fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE in three Jewish apocalypses," in *Modelling Early Christianity: Social-Scientific Studies of the New Testament in its Context* (London: Routledge, 1995), 239-258. Esler argues that 4 Ezra, 2 Apoc. Bar. and the later Apoc. Abr. present alternative discourses to subvert/challenge 'Roman subjection discourse.'

⁴¹ Collins, "From Prophecy to Apocalypticism," 159

the vision of the divine council into historical terms.’⁴² Hanson attempts to ground his apolitical reading of apocalyptic eschatology in the disenfranchisement of the groups who produced this literature in the post-exilic period.⁴³ Their powerless status led to the neglect of earthly concerns and the adoption of mythic ideas and imagery, expressed in the proto-apocalyptic literature.

Although the apocalyptic writers were unlikely to have been as ‘disenfranchised’ as Hanson claims,⁴⁴ it is true that they were relatively powerless compared to their foreign overlords. The picture in Daniel 1-7 of a pious Jew advising the Babylonian leader did not reflect historical reality, either in the exilic period or in later Jewish history. Nevertheless, the *relative* powerlessness of Jews does not make the apocalypses apolitical. The work of James C. Scott has shown that subordinate groups resist social elites in many different ways, although these have frequently been overlooked by historians and sociologists.⁴⁵ In particular, Scott argues that subordinate groups develop what he calls ‘hidden transcripts’ in criticism of the ruling elite, and in contrast to the ‘public transcripts’ of civic life.⁴⁶ ‘Hidden transcripts’ can take a variety of forms, including gossip, rumour, grumbling, and folk-tales.⁴⁷ Although these hidden transcripts are not explicitly anti-rule, except when they emerge publicly in times of rebellion, they still express resistance to rulers and, as such, are ways in which subordinate classes act ‘politically’. Scott calls the political life exercised by subordinate groups ‘infrapolitics’, indicating that it is frequently hidden but also ubiquitous.⁴⁸ Although Scott’s analysis studies relatively modern forms of resistance (and the apocalypses come from antiquity), his work is a

⁴² Hanson, *Dawn*, 29.

⁴³ Hanson, *Dawn*, 10-12, 407-409.

⁴⁴ We have already noted that apocalyptic eschatology cannot simply be confined to any one social tradition. Many apocalyptic texts may have been produced by elite groups within Jewish society, as opposed to those which were ‘socially deprived’. Cook’s demonstration (*Prophecy*) that many proto-apocalyptic texts were produced by priestly ruling groups to legitimatise their power makes it dangerous to argue that any one social status was ‘typical’ for the apocalyptic writers.

⁴⁵ James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990). Scott notes how historians often assume that only those in power have a political life.

⁴⁶ Scott, *Domination*, 1-16, for an introduction to these terms.

⁴⁷ Scott, *Domination*, 136-182.

⁴⁸ Scott, *Domination*, 183-184. He also refers to infrapolitics as the, ‘wide variety of low-profile forms of resistance that dare not speak in their own name,’ *Domination*, 19.

reminder that ideological resistance is an important response of subordinates to rulers.⁴⁹ The powerlessness of Jews under foreign rule in fact makes it likely that they would resist foreign overlords, if they did resist, within the conceptual and social worlds that were available to them. Apocalyptic eschatology provides just such a conceptual world, providing 'hidden transcripts' of hostility to foreign rulers.

Hanson also claims that the flamboyant, highly metaphorical language of the apocalypses indicates a fundamental disinterest in politics. This, however, radically misconceives the function of apocalyptic language. Apocalyptic language was not used to distance its readers from historical reality, but precisely to place that reality within the broader context of God's sovereignty.⁵⁰ Apocalyptists spoke about a transcendent realm, in which angels battled fallen angels and a New Jerusalem was prepared in heaven, in order to indicate the proper perspective on earthly affairs.⁵¹ As Wright puts it, 'complex, many-layered and often biblical imagery is used and re-used to invest the space-time events of Israel's past, present and future with their full theological significance.'⁵² Significantly, one of the social forms of resistance identified by Scott is labelled 'Symbolic Inversion'⁵³ and involves rhetoric of reversal (of 'static' roles), which is also characteristic of many of the apocalypses. In contemporary times, apocalyptic-type language has a clearly political function when it is used as propaganda between States.⁵⁴ Examples of the use of language will be presented through the following chapters.

Ideologically, apocalyptic eschatology was a political worldview because its disjunctive eschatology created a view of the world which conflicted and challenged the political hegemony of the ruling power. Despite the diversity in the particular

⁴⁹ Scott also notes that, 'similar structures of domination, other things equal, tend to provoke responses and forms of resistance that also bear a family resemblance to one another,' Scott, *Domination*, 20-21. This makes his model a useful one for our purposes.

⁵⁰ For the importance of God's sovereignty in apocalyptic, see Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 156-160.

⁵¹ See Wilder for a discussion of how this type of language relates to 'earthly' material; Amos N. Wilder, "Eschatological Imagery and Earthly Circumstance," *NTS* 5 (1958-59), 229-245.

⁵² N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 286. See also Rowland who denies that apocalyptic involves a retreat from history (*Open Heaven*, 37-38).

⁵³ Scott, *Domination*, 166-172.

⁵⁴ A well-known example is the rhetoric employed by the U.S. and Iraqi administration to characterise each other during the Gulf War.

descriptions of the end time,⁵⁵ apocalyptic eschatology presented a general narrative for God's eschatological activity. As Koch notes, 'the authors understand the eschatological events as a *sequence*'.⁵⁶ The eschatological period would be a time of sin, in which the righteous would suffer. God would intervene, however, by judging the perpetrators of sin (often focusing on rulers) and redeeming his people (with or without a specific redemption figure). Redemption would involve a transformation of the righteous and the world. The contrast between the present age and God's future is a consistent theme throughout this narrative,⁵⁷ making 'disjunctive eschatology' characteristic of apocalyptic. Even when separated from a social context of resistance, the narrative of apocalyptic eschatology encouraged resentment of the current order, supported prayers for its demise, and called for hope in God's future rule. It (re)presented the world in a way vastly different than that of the rulers, who liked to present their rule in teleological terms,⁵⁸ and was the basis on which apocalyptic eschatology advocated resistance to the ideology of foreign rulers.

The judgment of rulers expressed in Daniel 7, for example, is contrasted with the future time when God's people will possess the kingdom (Dan 7:22, 27).

Condemnation of leaders/rulers also occurs throughout *1 Enoch* (*1 Enoch* 38; 96:4-8), followed by God's new and eternal kingdom. 4 Ezra depicts Rome in damning imagery but also announces its future destruction by the Messiah (represented by the lion) (4 Ezra 10:60-12:51). Belief in the future actions of God enabled the apocalyptic writers to issue their damning verdict on the present. The politics of

⁵⁵ Rowley, *Relevance of Apocalyptic*, 7-8. Some of the visionaries wrote that the coming of God's kingdom would be a gradual development, while others emphasised the sudden disjunction in the ages caused by the arrival of God's kingdom. Some held that a messianic figure would be involved with the coming kingdom (*1 Enoch* 46-49 speaks of the 'Son of Man' and the 'Elect One'. See also 4 Ezra 12:31-39 for a 'Messiah'), while others focused on God's primary agency in his future plans (*1 Enoch* 100:5ff).

⁵⁶ Koch, *Rediscovery of Apocalyptic*, 33.

⁵⁷ Interpreters [often] highlight this characteristic of apocalyptic literature by drawing attention to the cosmological or temporal dualism found within apocalyptic. See Greg Carey, "Introduction: Apocalyptic Discourse, Apocalyptic Rhetoric," in *Vision and Persuasion: Rhetorical Dimensions of Apocalyptic Discourse*, ed. Greg Carey and L. Gregory Bloomquist, 1-17 (St. Louis, Missouri: Chalice Press, 1999), 3-5; Gerhard Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, vol. 2, *The Theology of Israel's Prophetic Traditions* (Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1965), 300-302; Vielhauer, "Introduction to Apocalypses," 549-555.

⁵⁸ For a enlightening demonstration of the conflict between apocalyptic and imperial propaganda, see Bruce Lincoln, "Apocalyptic Temporality," 457-475. Lincoln studies the inscriptions of Darius the Great (esp. the Bisitun inscriptions) and argues that they impose a religious meaning on his reign, one which is undermined by apocalyptic literature.

empires is placed within God's universal plan, and typically condemned as part of the suffering of the end-time. As Wengst notes, 'In perceiving the reality of suffering and in the proclamation of a counter-reality which overcomes it the apocalypses are not a flight into unreal imagery but politically explosive positions'.⁵⁹ This end-time story-line and its disjunctive eschatology, in which the future challenges the present, is the root of political features found within apocalyptic eschatology.

Disjunctive eschatology is particularly prominent in the historical apocalypses, in which the horizontal dimension is more prominent than the vertical. For this reason, the following chapters will illustrate political dimensions of apocalyptic eschatology by drawing material primarily from four of the apocalypses; Daniel 7-12, the *Book of Dreams* (1 Enoch 83-90), the *Apocalypse of Weeks* (1 Enoch 93:1-10; 91:11-17), and 4 Ezra. These four primary sources can be dated fairly specifically, and develop apocalyptic eschatology in their own unique ways.

The book of Daniel is the only apocalypse within the Hebrew Bible.⁶⁰ Its twelve chapters include a series of edifying stories concerning Daniel in exile (Dan 1 – 6) and a number of visions received by Daniel concerning the time of the end (Dan 7 – 12). Although the stories probably originated earlier than the visions, in their current form they provide the narrative settings for the visions in Daniel 7 – 12.⁶¹ The origin and development of the work is complicated by its bilingual character; Daniel 2:4b – 7:28 is in Aramaic and Daniel 1:1 – 2:4a and 8 – 12 is in Hebrew.

In its current form, Daniel was written to support Jews who were persecuted by Antiochus IV Epiphanes for their faithfulness to the law. Although several interpreters have identified the author of Daniel as belonging to the Hasidim (1 Macc 2:42; 7:13),⁶² more judicious use of the evidence allows no such definite setting. The author was certainly, however, among those whom he characterises as 'the

⁵⁹ Wengst, *Pax Romana*, 53.

⁶⁰ For introductions to Daniel, see Collins, *Daniel*, 1-89; John E. Goldingay, *Daniel*, WBC, ed. David A. Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker (Dallas, Texas: Word Books, 1989), xxi-xl, 320-334; Louis F. Hartman and Alexander A DiLella, *The Book of Daniel*, The Anchor Bible, ed. William Foxwell Albright and David Noel Freedman (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1977), 1-110; Paul Volz, *Die Eschatologie der jüdischen Gemeinde im neutestamentlichen Zeitalter*, 2nd ed. (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1934), 11-14.

⁶¹ See Collins, *Apocalyptic*, 70-72.

⁶² Hartman, *Book of Daniel*, 43-45.

discerning' (Dan 11:24, 32-35; 12:3, 10).⁶³ Internal evidence suggests that this group saw themselves as both faithful to the law and as teachers of Israel. Although they condemned the Seleucids as 'beasts' and usurpers (Dan 7:7-8), the 'discerning' did not support the Maccabean revolt (11:34), but instead looked forward to God's direct and supernatural deliverance of his people.

As noted previously, the apocalypse of Daniel occurs in chapters 7 – 12,⁶⁴ in which Daniel receives four different visions that are interpreted by an angel. Each of the visions is concerned with history up to the era of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, after which God finally delivers his people. Although details are scarce for the period of history following Antiochus, the visions clearly look forward a future in which God would rule and Jews would no longer suffer. The eschatological scenarios offered in each of the visions make them relevant for our investigation.⁶⁵ As the programmatic text for later apocalypses, the imagery and language of Daniel was also picked up by later apocalyptic literature.

1 Enoch is a collection of five different apocalypses associated with the mythical figure of Enoch.⁶⁶ The apocalypses originated in a number of different periods,

⁶³ Collins, *Daniel*, 69-70; Stefan Beyerle, "The Book of Daniel in its Social Setting," in *The Book of Daniel, Composition and Reception. Volume One*, ed. John J. Collins and Peter W. Flint, VTSup, 205-228 (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 210-221.

⁶⁴ Hartman claims that 2:13-45 also fits into the genre of apocalypse, Hartman, *Book of Daniel*, 62-65. However, the differences between the form of this text and the later passages leads to a fairer description by Collins, who claims, 'The dream is Daniel 2 should be regarded as an important prototype of the apocalyptic vision rather than as a fully developed example,' Collins, *Daniel*, 173.

⁶⁵ The political implications of its eschatology will be discussed below. For an interesting survey of later interpreters who read Daniel as politically radical, see Christopher Rowland, "The Book of Daniel and the Radical Critique of Empire. An Essay in Apocalyptic Hermeneutics," in *The Book of Daniel, Composition and Reception. Volume Two*, ed. John J. Collins and Peter W. Flint, VTSup (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 447-467.

⁶⁶ The sections of the work are as follows: *The Book of Watchers*, chaps. 1-37; *The Similitudes*, chaps. 37-71; the *Astronomical Books*, chaps. 72-82; the *Book of Dreams*, chaps. 83-90; the *Apocalypse of Weeks*, 93:1-10; 91:11-17; *Epistle of Enoch*, chaps. 91-108 (excluding the *Apocalypse of Weeks*). For introductions to 1 Enoch, see E. Isaac, "1 (Ethiopic Apocalypse of) Enoch: A New Translation and Introduction," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 1, ed. James H. Charlesworth (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1983), 5-12; Matthew Black, *The Book of 1 Enoch or 1 Enoch: A New English Edition*, SVTP, ed. A. M. Denis and M. de Jonge (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1985), 1-23; Rowley, *Relevance of Apocalyptic*, 52-58; Stone, "Apocalyptic Literature," 395-406; James C. VanderKam, *Enoch and the Growth of the Apocalyptic Tradition*, CBQMS, ed. Bruce Vawter et al. (Washington: The Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1984); George W. E. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch, Chapters 1-36, 81-108*, Hermeneia (Fortress Press: Minneapolis, 2001), 1-125. R. H. Charles, *The Book of Enoch or 1 Enoch* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1912), ix-cx.

ranging from the second century BCE to the first century CE. Traditions within the corpus, however, reflect earlier traditions, many of which appear to have originated in Babylon.⁶⁷ The full text of *1 Enoch* is found in a number of Ethiopian Manuscripts dating from the fifteenth century CE, though some are possibly older. Although the extant text is found only in Ethiopian translations, there are a number of Greek fragments covering sections of *1 Enoch*. The Qumran findings also included fragments of an Aramaic *1 Enoch*, which confirmed the earlier suspicion of scholars that the original text was Semitic.⁶⁸ These Aramaic fragments also prove that texts in *1 Enoch* predate Paul, although the absence of the *Similitudes of Enoch* (*1 Enoch* 37 – 71) at Qumran leaves open the question of whether it was a later addition to the Enoch corpus.⁶⁹ The Ethiopic texts of *1 Enoch* were probably translated from Greek versions of the Aramaic.

The variants found among the Ethiopic MSS and the Greek and Aramaic textual fragments of *1 Enoch* have led to different translations of the text. Interpreters have divided the Ethiopic MSS into two groups; Type I (also labelled α) and type II (also labelled β).⁷⁰ Type I texts include earlier MSS and are generally seen as more reliable, though they also contain a large number of errors. Type II MSS provide smoother translations but, in the judgment of most interpreters, contain less accurate readings. For this reason, translators have usually relied on several type I MSS in producing eclectic texts as the basis for their translations (only occasionally drawing on type II MSS).⁷¹ More recently, some translators have opted for a single MS as the basis of their translation, and have listed variants which differ from this text base.⁷² Within

⁶⁷ For a full account of traditions in *1 Enoch* and their sources, see Vanderkam, *Enoch*.

⁶⁸ For the Aramaic fragments of *1 Enoch*, their translation, and a (sometimes contentious) discussion of the issues they raise, see J. T. Milik (with Matthew Black), *The Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments of Qumrân Cave 4* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976).

⁶⁹ Isaac, "1 Enoch," 9. For copies of the texts at Qumran, see Milik, *Books of Enoch*.

⁷⁰ For a discussion of these categories (Type I and Type II), see Isaac, *1 Enoch*, 6, 10-11; Black, *1 Enoch*, 1-7; Michael A. Knibb, *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch: A New Edition in the Light of the Aramaic Dead Sea Fragments*, vol. 2, *Introduction, Translation and Commentary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 21-37.

⁷¹ This procedure is followed by Charles, Isaac, Black and others.

⁷² Knibb bases his translation on Rylands Ethiopic MS. 23, but also lists variants from this textual base. Knibb's decision to use this text is unusual, as it belongs to the older 'Category II' of Ethiopic MSS. For his justification of this decision, see Knibb, *Books of Enoch*, 21-37. Tiller protests Knibb's use of a Type II text as the text base of his translation, and instead produces another eclectic text of the *Animal Apocalypse* (part of the *Book of Dreams*); Patrick A. Tiller, *A Commentary on the Animal Apocalypse of 1 Enoch* (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1993), 129-132.

this thesis, I have chosen to use Isaac's translation of *1 Enoch*, which relies on an eclectic (reconstructed) text of 1 Enoch. Isaac's translation is well-known and lists variants when significant. Other translations, however, will also be consulted through the following chapters. Even though the different translations differ in the textual choices they make, it is safe to say that the variants in the text do not substantially alter the overall theology of *1 Enoch*.

The five works of *1 Enoch* were produced in different periods and contexts, but also display a large degree of theological unity. The gathering of these works into one corpus reflects their common tradition. All the works of *1 Enoch* regard the figure of Enoch as an apocalyptic seer who receives revelation from God to give to the faithful. The social and political dimensions of sin are also emphasised throughout *1 Enoch*.⁷³ This theme is most overt in the *Similitudes of Enoch*, in which the Son of Man judges the 'rulers and kings' of the world in the great assize (62:1 – 63:12).⁷⁴ Other works of *1 Enoch*, however, also stress the extent to which the powerful of the world sin against God. The fall of the Watchers (*1 Enoch* 6 – 16) is a neat allegory for the fall of those in power, even if it functions on a number of other levels as well.⁷⁵

The works of *1 Enoch* also belong to apocalyptic eschatology. Nickelsburg points out that each of the works of *1 Enoch* include the vertical and horizontal dimensions of this world view.⁷⁶ Most of the works of *1 Enoch* emphasise the vertical dimension. In the *Book of Watchers*, for instance, the progression of Enoch from earth to heaven plays a central role in the structure of the apocalypse (*1 Enoch* 17 – 36). A similar ascension of Enoch is found in the *Astronomical Books* (*1 Enoch* 81 – 82) and the *Similitudes of Enoch* (*1 Enoch* 70 – 71). The horizontal dimension of apocalyptic, however, is also present within these works, even if it is less overt than the contrast between heaven and earth. The beginning of the *Book of Watchers* describes God's glorious coming at the end of time, an opening which is central not only for the *Book*

⁷³ Isaac, "1 Enoch," 9.

⁷⁴ For a discussion of this passage, see chapter four.

⁷⁵ For the role of the book of Watchers (*1 Enoch* 1-37) within the development of apocalyptic, see Paolo Sacchi, "The Apocalyptic of the First Century: Sin and Judgment," in *Jewish Apocalyptic and its History*, JSNTSup, ed. James H. Charlesworth and Lester L. Grabbe (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990), 110-111.

⁷⁶ Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch* 1, 37-42.

of *Watchers* but for *1 Enoch* as a whole (*1 Enoch* 1). The announcement of God's coming sets the stage for the revelations recorded throughout the book.⁷⁷ Although knowledge of God's heavenly secrets is the central theme in the *Astronomical Books* (*1 Enoch* 72:1; 81:1-2), Enoch also receives knowledge of the eschatological judgment of sinners (*1 Enoch* 80:2-8). The *Similitudes of Enoch* emphasises the heavenly sphere of revelation, but also connects the revelation of heavenly mysteries with the future vindication of the righteous and the Elect One (*1 Enoch* 46-47, 52, 57). In each of the 'speculative' apocalypses of *1 Enoch*, then, horizontal dimensions of eschatology are also present.

In the two 'historical apocalypses' of *1 Enoch*, the *Book of Dreams* (83 – 90) and the *Apocalypse of Weeks* (93:1-10; 91:11-17), the horizontal dimensions of apocalyptic eschatology are more overt. The *Book of Dreams* was produced around the time of the Maccabean revolt, and responded to the persecution taking place under the Seleucids.⁷⁸ The *Book of Dreams* contains two distinct sections; the *Vision of the Deluge*, in which Enoch views the destruction of the world by a flood, and the *Animal Apocalypse*, which relates history allegorically down to the time of the Maccabean revolution (and beyond, to the eschatological time). The *Vision of the Deluge* depicts the Noahic flood as paradigmatic for God's later, eschatological judgment, while the sketch of history in the *Animal Apocalypse* ends with the eschatological era.

The *Apocalypse of Weeks*, incorporated at a later stage into the *Epistle of Enoch*, probably comes from an earlier date than the *Book of Dreams*, not least because there is no specific reference to the behaviour of the Seleucids.⁷⁹ Within this apocalypse,

⁷⁷ Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 37-38.

⁷⁸ In its sketch of history, the *Animal Apocalypse* provides helpful allusions to contemporary events which make it easier to date the vision. Its expectation that a Jewish revolt will be followed by a transformed, eschatological existence (*1 Enoch* 90:20-39) secures a dating of this vision before the establishment of the Hasmonean dynasty, but after the beginning of the Maccabean revolt. The *Vision of the Deluge* may be earlier, but is nevertheless placed within the context of the *Book of Dreams*, and so related to the events to which the *Animal Apocalypse* expects. For discussions of the date, see Black, *1 Enoch*, 19-21; Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 53-56; Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch I*, 360-361, and, especially, Tiller, *Animal Apocalypse*, 61-82.

⁷⁹ For discussions of date, see Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch I*, 440-441; Vanderkam, *Enoch and the Growth*, 142-149; S. B. Reid, "The Structure of the Ten Week Apocalypse and the Book of Dream Visions," *JSJ* 16 (1985), 189-201, 190. Some interpreters do, however, interpret the 'sword' (*1 Enoch* 91:12) as a reference to the Maccabean uprising, so Black, *1 Enoch*, 288, 292-293.

time and human history is presented as a series of ten periods ('weeks').⁸⁰ The 'seventh week' represents the period in which the author wrote his work, and the eight to the tenth week move to the eschatological events of the end. Although separated in later texts, the *Apocalypse of Weeks* was originally a unit, as reflected in the Qumran fragments.⁸¹

4 Ezra was written around the turn of the first century CE in response to the social and theological devastation caused by the destruction of Jerusalem.⁸² Although the work is set during the Babylonian exile, the author responds through this fictional setting to the fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE. The tragedy was a recent memory for the community when the work was written, and the question of why God allowed Jerusalem to fall is the central issue driving the work (4 Ezra 4:23; 10:21-23). A date in the time of Domitian for 4 Ezra is also suggested by closer examination of the Eagle Vision (11:1 – 12:36), in which the three 'heads' of the eagle fit the Flavian Emperors Vespasian, Titus and Domitian (11:29-35; 12:22-28).⁸³ The author believes that the end will come following the destruction of the 'third head', suggesting he lived during Domitian's reign (81-96 CE).⁸⁴

⁸⁰ Collins notes that this schematisation of history is common in apocalyptic, though the idea of ten weeks could reflect Persian influence; Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 49-52.

⁸¹ Knibb, *Book of Enoch*, 14.

⁸² For introductions to 4 Ezra, see B. M. Metzger, "The Fourth Book of Ezra: A New Translation and Introduction," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 1, ed. James H. Charlesworth (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1983), 517-520; Michael Edward Stone, *Fourth Ezra: A Commentary on the Fourth Book of Ezra*, Hermeneia, ed. Frank Moore Cross et al. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 1-42, *idem*, "On Reading an Apocalypse," in *Mysteries and Revelations: Apocalyptic Studies since the Uppsala Colloquium*; Myers, *I and II Esdras*, 107-136; R. J. Coggins and M. A. Knibb, *The First and Second Books of Esdras*, CBC, ed. P. R. Ackroyd A.R.C. Leaney and J. W. Packer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 100-110; Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 156-169; Bruce W. Longenecker, *Eschatology and the Covenant: A Comparison of 4 Ezra and Romans 1-11*, JSNSup, ed. David Hill (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), 40-49; *idem*, *2 Esdras*, Guides to Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995).

⁸³ See Stone, *4 Ezra*, 9-11; Myers, *I and II Esdras*, 129-131. Although the Flavian reading of this vision is accepted by most recent scholars, other possibilities are available. See Lorenzo DiTommaso, "Dating the Eagle Vision of 4 Ezra: A New Look at an Old Theory," *JSP* 20 (1999), 3-38. DiTommaso revives the older theory that the Eagle Vision in its present form can best be dated from the era of Severus, with the three heads representing Severus, Geta, and Caracalla. DiTommaso acknowledges, however, that 4 Ezra as a whole is best dated around the turn of the first century CE, and that it included an original version of the Eagle Vision. He contends that the Eagle Vision in its *present* form is a redaction/edition of an earlier one.

⁸⁴ The social context of the work remains difficult to determine (Stone, *4 Ezra*, 40-43). Longenecker, however, has recently argued that 4 Ezra was written for leaders at Yavneh. The leaders were to receive instruction in eschatological matters and the mysteries revealed, but without necessarily

Versions of 4 Ezra are found in a number of different languages, but the most reliable MSS are early Latin and Syriac texts.⁸⁵ Interpreters believe that the original text of 4 Ezra was Semitic, although no Semitic text or fragment has been found. 4 Ezra is structured in seven sections. Inconsistencies between the sections led at one stage to a multiplication of complicated source theories,⁸⁶ but most contemporary scholars prefer to let the contradictions stand in what seems to be a fundamentally unified work.⁸⁷

The seven sections of 4 Ezra can be divided between the first three sections, in which the angel Uriel engages in dialogue with Ezra, and sections four to seven, in which Ezra receives visions from God. In sections one to three, Ezra is sceptical of Uriel's responses to his agonising questions over the fall of Jerusalem and the fate of God's people. Like a latter-day Job, Ezra is unable to accept the council of his comforter (in this case, the angel Gabriel). In sections four to seven, however, Ezra appears to endorse the angel's earlier positions. This tension led earlier scholars to propose multiple sources, but has led more recent scholars to view section four, the vision of the mourning woman (4 Ezra 9:26 – 10:59), as a transitional section of the work. Within section four, Ezra sees a woman in the field mourning for her son, and attempts to comfort/console her (9:38 – 10:24). As he places her loss in perspective, Ezra sees the woman transform into the heavenly city and is struck by fear and awe. Stone's reading of the vision is that it represents a religious change in the author, which helps him move from the painful debate in the first three visions to an acceptance of pain and uncertainty (now externalised as the mourning woman) in the final sections of the work.⁸⁸ Others view the section differently,⁸⁹ but if the book is perceived as a unity, then this vision is clearly a transitional point in the work. Although its form differs in the first three sections and the last three sections, disjunctive eschatology is prominent throughout the work. While Uriel discusses the

passing on the information to the *hoi polloi*. See Bruce W. Longenecker, "Locating 4 Ezra: A Consideration of its Social Setting and Functions," *JSJ* 28 (1997), 271-293.

⁸⁵ For a discussion of the textual issues, see Stone, *4 Ezra*, 1-9.

⁸⁶ For source theories and a response, see Stone, *4 Ezra*, 11-21; "Reading an Apocalypse," 66-68; Longenecker, *2 Esdras*, 22-24.

⁸⁷ Stone, *4 Ezra*, 21-23; Coggins and Knibb, *Esdras*, 109.

⁸⁸ Stone, "Reading", 72-75.

⁸⁹ See Longenecker, *2 Esdras*, 59-69.

eschatological era in response to Ezra's questions in the first three sections, in the last four sections Ezra receives visions from God which also involve an overview of the eschatological era. The eschatological scenarios are not completely consistent throughout the work, but this is due to the different sources used by the author, as well as the different emphases of the particular texts.⁹⁰ Within the eschatology of 4 Ezra, the Eagle vision (4 Ezra 11:1 – 12:51) is particularly important because of its clear teaching that Rome (the eagle) faces destruction by a Messiah (the lion).⁹¹

These four apocalypses assume and develop the story-line of apocalyptic eschatology, a story which undergirds Paul's theology. The following chapters will deal with periods within this story-line: chapter three with judgment, chapter four with the redeemer figure (who appears in some forms of apocalyptic eschatology), and chapter five with future eschatological life. The themes rarely promote an explicitly political response to foreign rule, but rather assume functions related to community life. These themes act as grounds for ethical exhortations, for comfort and support, or even a way of solidifying the boundaries of the community.⁹²

Although these themes *function* in a variety of ways throughout the apocalypses, they consistently *maintain* a political dimension because they conceive of God's eschatological activity as occurring within history, even if it is the climax of history.⁹³ The eschatological events involve a radical overhaul of social and political structures. Function is certainly important in determining the meaning of a text, but it does not exhaust the meaning of a text (or, rather, for readers of a text).

⁹⁰ For a discussion of the eschatology of 4 Ezra and the different ways in which the author weaves together various traditions, see Stone, *4 Ezra*, 202-207.

⁹¹ Longenecker argues that 4 Ezra restricts eschatological mysteries for the leaders of the people (12:35-50; 13:53-56; 14:3-6) because it could encourage political insubordination or an uprising if revealed to the general faithful; Longenecker, "Locating 4 Ezra," 288-293. Longenecker's intriguing proposal recognises the political implications of apocalyptic eschatology, which could and did lead to revolt among some Jews (or, if not revolt, other forms of resistance).

⁹² Collins notes, 'on a fairly high level of abstraction, they [apocalypses] serve to exhort and console their addressees,' Collins, "From Prophecy to Apocalypticism," 147. For the functions of the judgment theme within Judaism, see David W. Kuck, *Judgment and Community Conflict: Paul's Use of Apocalyptic Judgment Language in 1 Corinthians 3:5-4:5* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992), 53-68.

⁹³ Speaking of eschatological expectation as referring to events 'beyond history' is misleading. Even if the events denoted involve spiritual and cosmic transformation, they are 'historical' to the extent that they include people of history within their fulfilment, i.e. they do not simply take place in a post-mortem realm. The apocalypses which form the exception to this were produced later and emphasise (sometimes solely) eschatology as a primary personal affair (cf., *3 Baruch*; *T.Abra.* 10-15 (rec. A); *ApocZeph*). Collins, "Jewish Apocalypses," 22-23. For this reason, these four apocalypses will not be included in our discussion.

Examples of political motifs in apocalyptic eschatology will be taken primarily from these texts, but other apocalyptic literature will also be consulted. The so-called 'speculative' apocalypses, although containing a less explicit eschatology, also include texts hinting at end-time narratives.⁹⁴ Other texts contain apocalyptic eschatological scenarios helpful for our discussion, including the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, the *Psalms of Solomon*, the *Sibylline Oracles*, and the Dead Sea Scrolls. As we noted earlier, 'apocalyptic literature' is a broader category than 'apocalypses'.

The *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* is a collection of pseudepigraphal accounts recounting the final words spoken by the twelve sons of Jacob/Israel.⁹⁵ Texts of the work are found in several translations, but the original collection was probably written in Greek and the Greek MSS are the most reliable.⁹⁶ Although the Testaments have accrued later Christian interpolations,⁹⁷ the collection is a Jewish composition which was written in the second century BCE.⁹⁸ A Hasmonean dating for the work has found strong supporters.⁹⁹ The *Testaments* are strongly ethical in tone, and draw on Hellenistic ethical themes and ideas in promulgating a universal ethic related to

⁹⁴ The date and themes of the speculative apocalypses will be discussed when passages from them are considered.

⁹⁵ For an introduction to the Test12Patr, see H. C. Kee, "Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs: A New Translation and Introduction," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1983), 775-781; Charles, *APOT* 2, 282-295; Marcinus De Jonge, "The Main Issues in the Study of the the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs," in *Jewish Eschatology, Early Christian Christology and the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, NovTSup, ed. C. K. Barrett et al. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991), 147-163; Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 106-113.

⁹⁶ For textual issues, see Kee, "Testaments," 775-776; Charles, *APOT* 2, 283-289; De Jonge, "Main Issues," 148-155. There are also earlier Hebrew and Aramaic texts which resemble a similar Testament tradition to the *T. 12 Patr.*, see De Jonge, "Main Issues," 151-155. Charles argued that the original text of the *T. 12 Patr.* was Hebrew, but for most scholars the evidence suggest that the texts were originally composed in Greek, even if the author(s) used earlier sources.

⁹⁷ Examples include *T. Levi* 14:2, *T. Asher* 17:3; *T. Benj.* 9:3.

⁹⁸ The majority of interpreters continue to identify the Test12Patr as Jewish. De Jonge, however, argues that the collection is actually a Christian composition (although based on Jewish traditions) which was put together around 200 CE; Marcinus De Jonge, *The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs: A Study of their Text, Composition, and Origin* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1953). His arguments have generally failed to convince others, because the 'Christian' elements of the Testaments appear tangential to the main work.

⁹⁹ See Charles, *APOT* 2, 289-290; Kee, "Testaments," 777-778. De Jonge favours a date closer to the second century CE.

the Jewish law.¹⁰⁰ The Testaments each follow a particular schema. The ethical exhortation is the central section of each Testament, but is preceded by a historical account and followed by future predictions.¹⁰¹ As Rowley notes, 'In each Testament we find history, exhortation and prophecy combined.'¹⁰²

They *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* also exhibit themes similar to those found in the apocalypses. The Testaments each deal with God's eschatological plan, and several contain references to end-time eschatological figures (*T. Levi* 19; *T. Reub.* 4-6; *T. Jud.* 14-20), as well as hints of a disjunctive eschatology. Apocalyptic eschatology is connecting closely to the ethical positions advocated by the author, functioning as an encouragement to act faithfully in the present age.

The *Psalms of Solomon* combine features of apocalyptic eschatology with imitations of biblical psalmody. This collection of eighteen psalms was probably written shortly after Pompey's desecration of Jerusalem in 63 BCE (referred to in *Pss. Sol.* 2), although some of these texts may predate this.¹⁰³ The Psalms express hostility to the Hasmonean dynasty as well as to Roman rulers. Although many interpreters have identified the Psalms of Solomon as Pharisaic, there is simply not enough information to substantiate this supposition, and recent interpreters have been unwilling to make this assertion.¹⁰⁴ In light of the diversity of early Judaism and the lack of concrete evidence, it is best to avoid labelling the group behind the *Psalms of Solomon*. The most important psalms within the collection for our purposes are psalms seventeen to eighteen, which depict a Davidic messianic figure. In its

¹⁰⁰ De Jonge claims, 'The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs were written with a parenetic purpose, and (nearly) all individual Testaments centre on the hortatory passages,' De Jonge, "Main Issues," 158.

¹⁰¹ Collins notes the following pattern within the Testaments: (1) historical retrospective, (2) ethical exhortation, (3) future prediction; Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 108.

¹⁰² Rowley, *Relevance of Apocalyptic*, 60-61.

¹⁰³ Cf., R. B. Wright, "Psalms of Solomon: A New Translation and Introduction," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol 2, ed. James H. Charlesworth, 639-670 (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1985), 640-641. For a survey of recent research on the *Pss. Sol.*, see Joseph L. Trafton, "The Psalms of Solomon in Recent Research," *JSP* 12 (1994), 3-19. Although most scholars accept an Hasmonean date for the *Pss. Sol.*, Atkinson's recent work argues that at least some of the *Pss. Sol.* Date from the time of Herod the Great; Kenneth Atkinson, *An Intertextual Study of the Psalms of Solomon*, Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity (Lewiston, New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2001), 410-419.

¹⁰⁴ Atkinson, *Intertextual*, 419-424; P. N. Franklyn, "The Cultic and Pious Climax of Eschatology in the Psalms of Solomon," *JSJ* 18, 1 (1987). 1-17, 15-17.

messianic expectation, the collection in the *Psalms of Solomon* is related to apocalyptic literature, even if it is not an apocalypse as such.¹⁰⁵

The passages found in the *Sibylline Oracles* originated over several centuries and were probably brought together in Egypt, although oracles in the collection were also produced in a number of other areas.¹⁰⁶ The collections of MSS used for the English translations are in Greek, and include three different textual ‘groups.’¹⁰⁷ The Sibyl was traditionally a wise and elderly female prophet (with semi-divine origins),¹⁰⁸ and numerous oracles were attributed to her in antiquity. A few quotations from the Sibyl are found in gentile writers, but the collection which has been preserved was shaped by Jewish and Christian writers, who also composed and added many of its oracles.¹⁰⁹ Because the Sibyl’s sayings were widely accepted as authoritative, Jews and Christians adopted the form for apologetic purposes. As Schürer puts it, ‘The Jewish or Christian authors allowed the ancient Sibyl to speak to the gentile peoples in Greek hexameters and in the language of Homer.’¹¹⁰

The *Sibylline Oracles* in the present collection includes several Jewish texts. Because the Sibyl often gave dire warnings to her hearers, such texts frequently focus on eschatology, and the time of the end is a recurring theme. The origins of the individual oracles in different periods and contexts means there are frequent differences between them. Although not strictly part of ‘apocalyptic literature’, the

¹⁰⁵ Flusser also notes, “The author is influenced by the contemporary apocalyptic trend. This is surely the main reason why, after the manner of apocalyptists, he does not name persons and political parties.” David Flusser, “Psalms, Hymns and Prayers,” in *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period: Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Qumran Sectarian Writings, Philo, Josephus*, CRINT, 551-577 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 573.

¹⁰⁶ For an introduction to the *Sibylline Oracles*, see Emil Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C. - A.D. 135)*, 3 vols., new rev. ed., ed. Geza Vermes et al. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1973), 618-654; John J. Collins, *The Sibylline Oracles of Egyptian Judaism*, SBLDS (Missoula, Montana: Society of Biblical Literature, 1974), 1-19; *idem*, “Sibylline Oracles: A New Translation and Introduction,” *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments*, ed. James H. Charlesworth, 317-472 (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1983), 317-326.

¹⁰⁷ For textual issues, see Collins, “Sibylline Oracles,” 321-322. Collins’ translation is used here.

¹⁰⁸ Although originally a single female, a number of Sibyls arose with time, including a Hebrew Sibyl. Ancient lists of these figures are found in Lactantius, *DivInst* 1.6 (Varro’s list) and Pausanias 10.12.1-9. See Schurer, *History of the Jewish People*, III.1, 619-627; Collins, “Sibylline Oracles,” 317-318.

¹⁰⁹ A famous collection was also found in Rome, where it played a prominent role in public life, particularly in times of civic strife. Unfortunately, this collection has not survived. See Collins, “Sibylline Oracles,” 319-320.

¹¹⁰ Schürer, *History of the Jewish People*, 628.

similarity of the *Sibylline Oracles* to motifs and themes within the apocalypses means that several of the oracles can be used with profit in discerning the function and use of apocalyptic eschatology.¹¹¹

Material from the Dead Sea Scrolls is also relevant for this study. The Qumran sect, probably an off-shoot of the Essene movement,¹¹² was characterised by an eschatological consciousness that marks it out as an apocalyptic community.¹¹³ Martinez identifies four apocalyptic features of the community; its dualism (and theory of evil); its belief in periods of history and expectation of the end; its communion with the heavenly world; and its belief in an eschatological war.¹¹⁴ The abundance of texts found around the Dead Sea, and the detailed instructions regarding entry into the Qumran community, grant an insight into a community which was influenced by an apocalyptic worldview.

As well as its ideological critique of foreign rulers, apocalyptic eschatology encouraged specific social and political forms of community. Apocalyptic texts gave rise to a variety of responses to foreign rule, confirming our previous argument that apocalyptic literature was not the product of one social movement. The typical political response of apocalyptic eschatology was patient endurance through crisis in trust that God would soon redeem the world.¹¹⁵ Daniel, produced at the height of the Maccabean crisis, endorsed this position. The comment that God's victory would take place 'without human hands' (8:25) is probably a renunciation of armed warfare against the Seleucids.¹¹⁶ Daniel's commitment to martyrdom rather than revolution, however, is a political choice, which trusted that God would free Israel from foreign oppressors. Apocalyptic eschatology also influenced movements of active resistance

¹¹¹ Collins notes, 'While there are important differences between Jewish apocalyptic and Hellenistic oracles, they shared the basic expectation of a time of distress followed by a radical transformation which would be accompanied by a future ideal kingdom,' Collins, *Sibylline Oracles*, 18

¹¹² For a defence and description of the Qumran community as Essenes, see Hartmut Stegemann, *The Library of Qumran: On the Essenes, Qumran, John the Baptist, and Jesus* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 1998), 139-210.

¹¹³ For a survey of apocalyptic features within Qumran, see John J. Collins, *Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, *The Literature of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997); and Martinez, "Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls", 162-192.

¹¹⁴ Martinez, "Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls", 162-192.

¹¹⁵ Collins notes that, 'The visionaries were seldom revolutionaries,' but also acknowledges the 'revolutionary potential' of the apocalyptic imagination. Collins, *Apocalyptic*, 215.

¹¹⁶ Collins, *Daniel*, 341.

against foreign rulers. As Russell notes, its literature was 'inflammatory material in the hands of those who wished to appeal to the religious fanaticism which became a feature of a particular section of the Jewish people.'¹¹⁷

The *Book of Dreams* and the *Apocalypse of Weeks* both envision the participation of Jews in wars against foreign rulers (*1 Enoch* 90:19; 91:12). At the popular level, as opposed to the scribal communities which produced the apocalyptic literature, apocalyptic eschatology may have also influenced those involved in the revolt. Faith in God's redeeming and vindicating future activity strengthened loyalty to the Law, even though it could bring death. As Horsley claims, 'it is difficult to imagine how the Judean peasantry could have sustained such a prolonged struggle against the overwhelming odds of the Seleucid military might without supposing that at least significant segments of the people were fired by apocalyptic inspiration.'¹¹⁸ Aside from *Animal Apocalypse* and the *Apocalypse of Weeks*, however, there is an unfortunate lack of information that might substantiate this suspicion.

There is more evidence that first century resistance movements against Rome drew on apocalyptic eschatology. The connection between messianic hope and apocalyptic eschatology makes it likely that those movements which proclaimed their leaders as kings were also influenced by the disjunctive eschatology of apocalyptic.¹¹⁹ A number of the first century resistance movements were messianic.¹²⁰ Josephus' description of the revolutionary groups that sprang up at the time of Herod's death in 4 BCE indicates several messianic figures, including Judas, Simon, and Athonges.¹²¹ According to Josephus, Judas' attack on Sepphoris was due to 'his desire for great

¹¹⁷ Russell, *Method*, 17.

¹¹⁸ Horsley, *Bandits, Prophets, and Messiahs*, 19.

¹¹⁹ For the connection between Messianism and apocalyptic, see most recently VanderKam, "Messianism and Apocalypticism," 193-228.

¹²⁰ The following draws on Richard A. Horsley, "Popular Messianic Movements around the Time of Jesus," *CBQ* 46 (1984), 471-495; idem. *Bandits, Prophets, and Messiahs*, 88-131. Horsley points out that the tradition of 'popular kingship,' and the social movements connected with it, are important to take into account for understanding Jewish ideas of the Messiah. See also Andrew Chester, "Jewish Messianic Expectations and Mediatoral Figures and Pauline Christology," in *Paulus und das antike Judentum: Tübingen-Durham Symposium im Gedenken an den 50. Todestag Adolf Schlatters (19. Mai 1938)*, WUNT, ed. Martin Hengel and Ulrich Heckel, 17-89 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1991), 40-47; Elliott, *Liberating Paul*, 149-154.

¹²¹ Josephus also describes these figures in *BJ* 2, 55-65. In other sections, he describes revolutionary movements which were not necessarily messianic. For a survey of prophetic movements and the manner in which they resisted rulers, see Horsley, *Bandits, Prophets, and Messiahs*, 135-189.

possessions and his ambition for royal rank.' (*AJ* 17, 272), Simon was 'bold enough to place the diadem on his head.' (*AJ* 17, 273), and Anthoges claimed kingship (*AJ* 7, 278). Josephus claims that anyone could claim to be a king if he gained support of rebels (*AJ* 17, 285). Other figures claimed messianic status around the time of the Jewish revolt, including Menahem, son of Judas the Galilean (*BJ* 2, 434), and Simon, son of Giora (*BJ* 4, 510). Josephus' only explicit acknowledgment of messianic hope occurs in a digression following his descriptions of signs foretelling the destruction of Jerusalem. He refers to a messianic oracle accepted by the revolutionaries, which prevented the Jews from correctly interpreting the signs foretelling the coming destruction. Josephus' record of the oracle records, 'at that time one from their country would become ruler of the world.' (*BJ* 6, 312-313). Josephus notes how they applied the oracle to themselves but claims it actually applied to the Roman general (and later Emperor) Vespasian. The Roman historian Tacitus also mentions this Jewish oracle, claiming, 'The majority firmly believed that their ancient priestly writings contained the prophecy that this was the very time when the East should grow strong and that men starting from Judea should possess the world.' (*Tac. Hist.* 5, 12). Wherever the precise oracle referred to is found, it is likely that apocalyptic eschatology at a popular level fuelled the hope for the coming Messiah and led Jews to seek appropriate signs.

A further messianic movement arose during the time of Hadrian, under the leadership of Simon Bar Kochba.¹²² The rebellion began as a response to Hadrian's proposal to build a pagan temple on the site of Jerusalem, as well as his edict forbidding castration (which included circumcision). The leader's name, Bar Kochba, 'Son of the Star', alluded to Numbers 24:17, which was read messianically. Several coins were produced during the revolt which portrayed the image of a star. The revolt was unsuccessful and led to the exclusion of Jews from Jerusalem on pain of death, as well as the transformation of the city into a Roman colony.

Although the Qumran community was a sectarian movement withdrawn from society, their writings reflect a willingness to participate in God's final war. The Dead Sea Scrolls include militant appropriations of apocalyptic eschatology.¹²³ In particular, the War Scroll includes detailed military information which shows that the

¹²² Schürer, *History of the Jewish People*, 534-557.

¹²³ For judgment at Qumran, see David W. Kuck, *Judgment and Community Conflict*, 77-88.

Covenanters would fight when they believed that the final battle had come (1QM 15-19). The detailed preparations for war mentioned in the Scroll outdo anything from the apocalypses.

The apocalypses, whether or not they supported active resistance against foreign rulers, endorsed the narrative of disjunctive eschatology and its political ideology. This was the root of the further political features in the apocalypses, including their condemnation of rulers, belief in eschatological redemption-figures,¹²⁴ and visions of a kingdom of God. It was this worldview which Paul inherited in his adoption of apocalyptic eschatology.

Paul as an Apocalyptic Thinker

Paul's creative reinterpretation of the Christ-event drew greatly on apocalyptic eschatology as, in fact, did Christian theology as a whole. Käsemann's oft-repeated dictum, 'Apocalyptic was the mother of all Christian theology',¹²⁵ has received wide acceptance among other New Testament scholars.¹²⁶ The apocalyptic Paul, like the apocalyptic Jesus, has been an important figure in twentieth-century biblical scholarship.¹²⁷ Schweitzer set the scene for the century by arguing that the central motif of participation in Christ found in Paul derived from an adoption of apocalyptic eschatology. This left justification by faith, seen by Protestant interpreters as Paul's central message, a 'subsidiary crater' in the thought of Paul.¹²⁸ Bultmann's massive stature as a biblical critic and a theologian meant that his rejection of apocalyptic in favour of a neoorthodox reading of justification by faith again left apocalyptic in the backwaters of biblical studies.¹²⁹ It was left to Bultmann's pupil Käsemann to

¹²⁴ These figures, however, do not feature in all the apocalypses. See chap. 4.

¹²⁵ Ernst Käsemann, "The Beginnings of Christian Theology," *New Testament Questions of Today*, NTL, ed. Alan Richardson et al., 82-107 (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1969). 102.

¹²⁶ J. Christiaan Beker, *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought*, new ed., (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1989); Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 206-214; John G. Gager, *Kingdom and Community: The Social World of Early Christianity*, PHRS (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1975), 43; R. B. Hays, "'Why do you stand looking up Toward Heaven?' New Testament Eschatology at the Turn of the Millennium," *MTh* 16, 1 (2000), 115-135, esp. 116; Calvin J. Roetzel, "Paul as Organic Intellectual," 221-243.

¹²⁷ For a description of the history of research of apocalyptic in Paul, see Johnson, *Apocalyptic and Wisdom Traditions*, 6-23.

¹²⁸ Schweitzer, *Mysticism of Paul*, 225.

¹²⁹ Matlock argues that Bultmann's 'interpretation' of apocalyptic rested on an acceptance of apocalyptic language within early Christianity, so that contrasting Schweitzer and Bultmann by means

reclaim the importance of apocalyptic in Paul, as well as in the other early Christian thinkers.¹³⁰

In the English speaking world, Beker's work, *Paul the Apostle*, argued that apocalyptic was the controlling matrix of thought for Paul. As he put it, 'Apocalyptic is not a peripheral curiosity for Paul, but the central climate and focus of his thought, as it was for most early Christian thinkers.'¹³¹ And, elsewhere, 'It seems for Paul the apocalyptic world view is so interwoven with the truth of the gospel that if they are separated the gospel will be torn apart.'¹³² Beker's work demonstrated the extent to which apocalyptic formed part of Paul's thought world. Although he may have overstated his case, his argument has convinced many that apocalyptic is a central part of Paul's world view. Since Beker, a number of scholars have worked at locating the extent and location of apocalyptic within Paul.¹³³

Paul's theology shares in the world-view of apocalyptic eschatology, although significantly modified by the Christ event.¹³⁴ The most significant indication of this is Paul's belief in the resurrection of Christ (Rom 1:3-4; 4:24-25; 8:11; 1 Cor 15:1-57), which represents the 'first-fruits' of the future resurrection (1 Cor 15:20). As Keck notes, 'whoever affirms that a resurrection has occurred affirms also that an

of their acceptance/rejection of apocalyptic is misleading, Matlock, *Unveiling*, 100-129. Nevertheless, it remains true that for Bultmann, Paul's own demythologizing (and stress on realisation) of apocalyptic is more important than the presence of apocalyptic as such. Thus, Bultmann's project led to a minimising of apocalyptic ideas in favour of Paul's 'real' theology which is actually anthropology.

¹³⁰ See Ernst Käsemann, "Beginnings of Christian Theology", 82-107; *idem.*, "On the Subject of Primitive Christian Apocalyptic," in *New Testament Questions of Today*, NTL, ed. Alan Richardson et al. (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1969), 108-137.

¹³¹ Beker, *Paul the Apostle*, 144.

¹³² Beker, *Paul the Apostle*, 172.

¹³³ Martinus C. de Boer, *The Defeat of Death: Apocalyptic Eschatology in 1 Corinthians 15 and Romans 5*, JSNTSup, ed. David Hill (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1988); *idem.*, "Paul and Jewish Apocalyptic Eschatology," in *Apocalyptic and the New Testament: Essays in Honor of J. Louis Martyn*, JSNTSup, ed. David Hill (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989), 169-190; *idem.*, "Paul and Apocalyptic Eschatology," 344-383; Vincent P. Branick, "Apocalyptic Paul?" *CBQ* 47/4 (1985), 664-675; Johnson, *Apocalyptic and Wisdom Traditions*; Keck, "Paul and Apocalyptic," 229-241; C. Marvin Pate, *The End of the Ages has Come: The Theology of Paul* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995); J. P. Sampley, *Walking Between the Times: Paul's Moral Reasoning* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1991).

¹³⁴ For overviews of Paul's apocalyptic world-view, see Geerhardus Vos, *The Pauline Eschatology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1953); Sampley, *Walking*, 7-24; and, especially, M. C. de Boer, "Paul and Apocalyptic Eschatology," 344-383.

end-time scenario is now launched.’¹³⁵ In apocalyptic eschatology, resurrection was seen as part of God’s final restoration of creation, or the beginning of the new creation (Dan 12:2-3; *1 Enoch* 90:38; 4 Ezra 7:32ff).¹³⁶ Resurrection was a communal event, although there were differing views of whether resurrection was simply of the dead or of the righteous dead.¹³⁷ Paul and the early Christians believed that the resurrection of an *individual* – of the Messiah, Jesus – had occurred within history.¹³⁸

Belief in Christ’s resurrection also led to an assessment of Jesus’ death in apocalyptic categories. The death of Jesus was the death of the powers and rulers of this world, as well as the death of sin and the death of death (1 Cor 2:6; 15:25-26). This led to a fundamental change in the form of apocalyptic eschatology. The most significant event – Christ’s death/resurrection – had occurred in the past.¹³⁹ God’s future reign was drawn into the present (among those with eyes to see). A ‘new creation’ had occurred (2 Cor 5:17), which was not simply that of the Christian congregations but signalled an actual ontological change in the way things were. The presence of the Spirit among Christian believers indicated their participation in God’s future kingdom.¹⁴⁰ The salvation brought by Christ was not limited to the experience of personal salvation, but rather extended throughout the earth to heaven itself. The early Christians were forced to work out the implications of this shift for their social,

¹³⁵ Keck, “Paul and Apocalyptic,” 236.

¹³⁶ For the development of resurrection beliefs (and in other forms of eternal life), see George W. E. Nickelsburg, *Resurrection, Immortality, and Eternal Life in Intertestamental Judaism*, HTS (Cambridge: Harvard University Press; London: Oxford University Press, 1972).

¹³⁷ For a discussion of the extent of the resurrection, see Vos, *Pauline Eschatology*, 215-225. Nickelsburg, *Resurrection*. While Vos examines Paul, Nickelsburg discusses the development in resurrection motifs throughout intertestamental Jewish literature.

¹³⁸ This leads to the question of how the early Christians recognised the appearances of Christ as *resurrection* appearances, if indeed this broke so fundamentally with Jewish expectations. Allison argues that the best way to account for this is that Jesus himself interpreted his ministry and death in eschatological terms (as part of the final tribulation), and also prophesied his vindication/resurrection. Dale C. Allison, *The End of the Ages Has Come: An Early Interpretation of the Passion and Resurrection of Jesus*, SNTW, ed. John Riches (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988), 99-100.

¹³⁹ De Boer, “Paul and Apocalyptic Eschatology”, 346-347; James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 461-466; Oscar Cullmann *Christ and Time: The Primitive Christian Conception of Time and History* (London: SCM Press, 1951), 81.

¹⁴⁰ Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 416-419; Gordon D. Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 802-826; Vos, *Pauline Eschatology*, 159-171.

cultural and, arguably, political activities. As Roetzel notes, 'This straining between the present and the future created explosive tensions that are often underestimated.'¹⁴¹

Although Christ's resurrection, then, led to a realised form of eschatology among the Christian communities, a future dimension remained. Belief in Jesus' resurrection as 'first fruits from the dead' led to the imminent expectation of the future consummation and resurrection of the dead.¹⁴² Present dimensions of redemption were anticipations of God's future consummation. The Spirit, though active in the congregation (1 Cor 12:1-13; Rom 8:1-8; Gal 3:2-5), was a pledge of something more (2 Cor 1:22; 5:5; Eph 1:13-14). Salvation, experienced in the present (Rom 5:9; 1 Cor 15:2; 2 Cor 6:2), confirmed God's future verdict (Rom 8:24; Phil 2:12). Paul expected Christ to figure in the final consummation and so looked forward to Christ's Parousia. The 'day of the Lord' was transposed from God's final day to the day of Christ Jesus (1 Thess 5:1-11; 1 Cor 1:8; 5:5; Phil 1:6).

The belief that God's future would supersede the present led to the apocalyptic contrast between this age and the one to come. Although never made as explicit as in 4 Ezra 7:50 ('the Most High has made not one world but two'), the contrast is implicit in several sections of Paul's letters.¹⁴³ In Galatians 1:4, Paul writes of how God has delivered us from 'the present evil age', indicating a contrast with the age to come. Paul uses different language to speak about God's coming age, such as the 'kingdom of God' (1 Cor 6:9-10; 15:50; Rom 14:17) and 'eternal life' (Rom 5:21; 6:22). Paul assumes the story-line of apocalyptic eschatology and grants Christ a central role within it.

As in the apocalypses, Paul adapts themes from this eschatological narrative and orientates them towards community life.¹⁴⁴ Several interpreters have argued that the

¹⁴¹ Roetzel, "Paul as Organic Intellectual," 233.

¹⁴² Combined with the experience of the Spirit, this led, in some Christian communities at least, to an overrealised eschatology (Thessalonica and Corinth).

¹⁴³ Vos, *Pauline Eschatology*, 9-16; de Boer, *The Defeat of Death*, 21-23.

¹⁴⁴ For a discussion of the functions of Paul's apocalyptic language, see Wayne A. Meeks, "Social Functions of Apocalyptic Language in Pauline Christianity," in *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and the Near East: Proceedings of the International Colloquium on Apocalypticism. Uppsala, August 12-17, 1979*, ed. David Hellholm, (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1989), 687-705; Gager, *Kingdom and Community*; and, on the use of the language in 1 Cor, Kuck, *Judgment and Community Conflict*, 223-239.

community or anthropological orientation of these themes represents Paul's movement away from the crass apocalypticism (and its cosmology) of his earlier days and towards a more 'Christian' vision.¹⁴⁵ The argument is that by using these motifs to address and exhort the community, Paul leaves behind the broader cosmological (and political) themes of apocalyptic. Precisely in adapting apocalyptic eschatology, however, Paul is heir to its public (and so political) character. As de Boer notes,

Apocalyptic eschatology is fundamentally concerned with God's active and visible rectification (putting right) of the created world (the "cosmos"), which has somehow gone astray and become alienated from God.¹⁴⁶

Paul appeals to a story-line in which God reorders and transforms the world in line with his purposes. Paul never rejects this 'public' character of apocalyptic eschatology, but encourages believers by appealing to its story-line (centred now on Christ) because he believes that God will soon change this world.

Although apocalyptic eschatology occurs in all of Paul's letters, Adams' recent study has downplayed its extent in Romans. Adams argues that Paul has limited his use of apocalyptic dualism in Romans, and instead emphasised the importance of creation, in order to support his call for social harmony in the paraenetic sections of the letter.¹⁴⁷ He reaches his conclusion by studying Paul's use of 'κόσμος' and 'κτίσις' in Romans and 1 Corinthians. In 1 Corinthians, the phrases are frequently negative, suggesting a more hostile attitude to outsiders (1 Cor 1:20, 27; 6:2; 7:31), while in Romans, they are either neutral or positive (Rom 1:8, 20; 5:12; 8:19-22), which leads Adams to conclude that Paul's attitude to the world is much more positive here than in 1 Corinthians. The differences between these two letters is due to their social situations: in 1 Corinthians, Paul employs an apocalyptic dualism to buttress the boundaries of the community, whereas in Romans, he emphasises God as creator and

¹⁴⁵ See Frank C. Porter, "The Place of Apocalyptic Conceptions in the Thought of Paul," *JBL* 41 (1922), 183-204; C. H. Dodd, "The Mind of Paul: II," *New Testament Studies* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1953), 83-128, and, Baumgarten, *Paulus und die Apokalypik*, esp., 232-236, 240-243. Dodd posits a development within Paul's letters towards a less apocalyptic perspective, whereas Baumgarten argues that the 'cosmological' apocalyptic traditions received by Paul are relativised by his 'anthropological' perspective. In his contrast between Paul's eschatology and Jewish eschatology, Vos also maintains that Paul dropped the political aspects of the latter; *Pauline*, 27-28, f/n 36.

¹⁴⁶ De Boer, "Paul and apocalyptic eschatology," 350.

¹⁴⁷ Edward Adams, *Constructing the World: A Study in Paul's Cosmological Language*, SNTW, ed. John Barclay, Joel Marcus, and John Riches (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 151-220.

the creation, so creating social harmony, in order to protect the vulnerable Christians in Rome.

Although it is true that Romans does not share the number of ‘apocalyptic dualisms’ identified by Adams in 1 Corinthians, Paul in Romans nonetheless extensively employs apocalyptic eschatology in the articulation of his gospel. In fact, no other letter of Paul comes close to Romans in sketching an apocalyptic *Heilsgeschichte*, despite the lack of explicit ‘dualisms’. Whereas in 1 Corinthians, the apocalyptic frame-work lies beneath the surface, in Romans it becomes a structuring motif for Paul’s argument as a whole. Romans 1:18-3:20 functions not as an ahistorical indictment of humanity, but as an apocalyptic proclamation that the time before God’s redemptive work in Christ was a time of sin and depravity. Romans 5:12-21, a crux within Paul’s argument, contrasts the old Adam with the new Adam, and the contrast between this age and the next is grafted onto the old Adam – new Adam division. In Romans 8:18-38, Paul looks forward in hope to the final redemption to take place in Christ.

In view of the eschatological time-line which frames Paul’s argument in Romans, it becomes less significant that the apocalyptic ‘dualisms’ which Adams appeals to in 1 Corinthians are less overt in Romans.¹⁴⁸ The lack of dualisms does not make Romans any less apocalyptic, but it does change the style of apocalyptic to which Paul appeals. The contrast, then, is not between a non-apocalyptic Romans and an apocalyptic 1 Corinthians, but between the extent to which these two letters appeal to strong dualisms. If Adams is correct in asserting that Paul leaves out the apocalyptic dualisms as a way of allowing the Roman community to engage with the world, then this strengthens our reading of Romans 13:1-7.¹⁴⁹ If Paul minimises apocalyptic dualisms in Romans to allow the church in Rome a more positive relationship with the outside world, then this fits well with our thesis that Paul writes Romans 13:1-7 to prevent Christians in Rome from assuming a negative assessment of Roman rule.

¹⁴⁸ It is important to note that although less overt, apocalyptic dualisms are in fact present in Romans. Adams overplays his hand when he tries to minimise the implicit dualism of e.g., Romans 8:19-22, *Constructing the World*, 174-184. Although, to be sure, the text speaks of the transformation rather than the destruction of the world, the language associated with the transformation shows the radical difference between this age and the next.

¹⁴⁹ A point made by Prof John Barclay in the course of examining this thesis.

Although Adams' study convincingly shows that Paul employed his eschatological perspective differently depending on the situation to which he wrote, apocalyptic eschatology remained important in Romans. The eschatological narrative of apocalyptic underlies Paul's argument in the letter, as the next three chapters will demonstrate. Paul also appeals to an apocalyptic perspective in Romans 1:16-17, which summarises the theme of Romans.

Romans 1:16-17 functions as the climax of the thanksgiving and the introduction to the main theme of the letter, the righteousness of God. Paul draws out the implications of God's righteousness throughout his epistle for relationships between Jews and gentiles in the Church, aiming specifically to attack the gentile Christian belief that there was little place for Jewish Christianity (11:17-24). Within his succinct introduction, Paul also introduces other main themes in his argument, including the salvation-order of 'Jew first, then Gentile,' and the importance of 'living' by faith.¹⁵⁰ More important for our purpose, Romans 1:16-17 is framed in the context of apocalyptic eschatology, which indicates the importance of this world-view for the letter body. The text also reveals how Paul's inheritance of apocalyptic eschatology is at the same time an adaptation of its themes. Innovations were made necessary by the shattering inclusion of Christ into the apocalyptic world-view.

The apocalyptic basis for Paul's gospel is indicated by the central place given to the 'righteousness of God', δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ (Rom 1:17). Stuhlmacher describes this phrase as a technical term of apocalyptic,¹⁵¹ but it is the context rather than the phrase as such which indicates the apocalyptic application of the term. In the Hebrew Bible, righteousness was applied to both the activity of humans and the activity of God.¹⁵² It encompassed a wide range of behaviours, including legal activity (Isa 5:7;

¹⁵⁰ Nygren suggest that the first part of the Habbakuk quotation corresponds to the first eleven chapters, while the second part indicates the content of chaps. 12-15; Anders Nygren, *Commentary on Romans* (London: SCM Press, 1952), 29-41.

¹⁵¹ 'Paulus hat, als er von δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ sprach, einen apokalyptischen term. techn. übernommen.' Peter Stuhlmacher, *Gerechtigkeit Gottes bei Paulus*, FRLANT, ed. Ernst Käsemann and Ernst Würthwein (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965), 71. In a later article, however, Stuhlmacher recognises that such a fixed meaning is unlikely; Peter Stuhlmacher, "The Apostle Paul's View of Righteousness," in *Reconciliation, Law, and Righteousness: Essays in Biblical Theology*, 68-93 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 91-92 (f/note 16).

¹⁵² For a discussion of the background of 'righteousness' and 'righteousness of God' in the Hebrew Bible, see J. A. Ziesler, *The Meaning of Righteousness in Paul: A Linguistic and Theological Enquiry*, SNTSMS, ed. Matthew Black (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 17-46; Stuhlmacher, *Gerechtigkeit*, 113-145; John Reumann, *Righteousness in the New Testament: "Justification" in the*

Ps 9:5), human morality (Gen 6:9; Ezek 18:5), God's faithfulness and reliability (Jer 9:24; Isa 24:16), and God's saving activity (Isa 46:13; 51:5; 56:1).¹⁵³ Ziesler argues convincingly that loyalty to the covenant, both human and divine, best explains the various uses.¹⁵⁴ Later developments in the Hebrew Bible, particularly in late prophetic literature, associated righteousness with God's future era (Jer 23:5; Isa 51:5; 54:14-17). The theme of the eschatological righteousness was thus drawn on by the apocalyptic literature (Dan 9:24; 4 Ezra 7:114; *1 Enoch* 71:14; 99:10; *T.Dan* 6:10), and the righteousness of God is central in some of the Qumran documents (1QS 10:12; 11:12; 1QM 4:6).

The context of Paul's proclamation of God's righteousness shows that Paul is heir to this apocalyptic tradition.¹⁵⁵ In Romans 1:16, Paul claims that God's power is working out salvation for both Jew and gentile. Although God 'saved' throughout Israelite history, 'salvation' was also a concept associated with the end time (1 Thess 5:9, 10; 1 Cor 5:5).¹⁵⁶ Final salvation indicated that God would right all wrongs and renew the world. Paul indicates here, however, that this salvation was occurring in the present, which implies that God was in Christ fulfilling ancient promises to his people. Although a future 'salvation' is mainly found in Paul (13:11; 1 Cor 3:15), it is to some extent depicted as a present reality (8:24; 2 Cor 6:2), as it is here.¹⁵⁷

United States Lutheran-Catholic Dialogue (Philadelphia: Fortress Press; New York: Paulist Press, 1982), 12-22.

¹⁵³ See the list of uses in Reumann, *Righteousness*, 14-16.

¹⁵⁴ 'Righteousness is neither a virtue nor the sum of the virtues, it is activity which befits the covenant,' Ziesler, *Righteousness*, 40.

¹⁵⁵ Discussion of the 'righteousness of God' took a turn with Käsemann's article, "'The Righteousness of God' in Paul," in *New Testament Questions of Today*, NTL, ed. Alan Richardson et al., 168-182, (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1969). Käsemann, against previous readings of the phrase as an objective genitive or genitive of origin, argued that God's righteousness was both power and gift. Peter Stuhlmacher followed up Käsemann's insights with, *Gerechtigkeit Gottes*. A strong consensus recognises the reading of 'δικαιοσύνη Θεοῦ' in terms of God's redemptive/faithful activity, although interpreters nuance the phrase differently. See Reumann, *Righteousness*, 41-123; See Sam K. Williams, "The 'Righteousness of God' in Romans," *JBL* 99, 2 (1980), 241-290; Marion L. Soards, "The Righteousness of God in the Letters of Paul," *BTB* 15 (1985), 104-109.

¹⁵⁶ 'Salvation means being saved from the wrath of God (v. 9); it is thus a term which belongs within the framework of apocalyptic eschatology,' C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, ed. Henry Chadwick (Black's New Testament Commentaries (London: A & C Black, 1971), 27.

¹⁵⁷ Käsemann, *Romans*, 21-22.

Paul's claim that salvation was in the present does not mean it is not eschatological, but reveals that the time-table for the eschatology he speaks of has been interrupted by Christ. The most important eschatological events have taken place in Christ.¹⁵⁸ The resurrection of Christ, followed by the coming of the Spirit, leads Paul to affirm that in such respects the end-time has begun. This tension between present realisation and future hope was a result of the Christ event for the early Christians, and meant a creative adaptation of apocalyptic eschatology. Depending on the situation in which he wrote, Paul could emphasise the present reality of eschatological hopes or their future fulfilment.¹⁵⁹ Here, Paul characterises the Gospel as power leading to salvation.

The apocalyptic context of the 'righteousness of God' is also supported by Paul's quotation from Habakkuk. Hays has drawn attention to the original context of the minor prophet where the issue of theodicy is a major concern.¹⁶⁰ Also important, however, is the eschatological context of the text in Habakkuk. Immediately preceding 2:4, Habakkuk writes of the 'vision of the end time', which he promises is imminent. The eschatological possibilities of such language are illustrated by the use of Habakkuk at Qumran, where a community text is devoted to relating the ancient prophecy to their own day (1QpHab 8:1-3).¹⁶¹

The reference to the 'righteous one' ('ὁ δίκαιος') in Romans 1:17 has conventionally been read as referring to the believer, who lives by faith.¹⁶² Such a reading allows interpreters to connect this text with the theme of the salvation of those living by faith which is found throughout Romans (e.g. 3:22, 30; 4:16). Several recent interpreters, however, have argued that the 'righteous one' refers to Christ; Christ lives by his 'faithfulness'.¹⁶³ These interpreters point out that 'righteous one'

¹⁵⁸ De Boer, "Paul and Apocalyptic Eschatology", 354-357; Cullmann, *Christ and Time*, 81-87.

¹⁵⁹ So in Gal, Paul emphasises realised eschatology, combating Judaizers, whereas in 1 Cor, Paul focuses on future hope, challenging the theology of an overrealised eschatology. See Meeks for these two examples; Meeks, "Social Functions", 695-700.

¹⁶⁰ Hays, *Echoes*, 40.

¹⁶¹ Käsemann, *Romans*, 30-32.

¹⁶² Cranfield, *Romans I*, 100-102; Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 44-46; Peter Stuhlmacher, *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Commentary*, trans. Scott J. Hafeman (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994), 29; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 264-267.

¹⁶³ Richard B. Hays, "The 'Righteous One' as Eschatological Deliverer: A Case Study in Paul's Apocalyptic Hermeneutics," in *Apocalyptic and the New Testament: Essays in Honor of J. Louis Martyn*, JSNTSS, J. Marcus and M. Soards (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989), 191-216; Douglas A.

occurs as an epitaph for Christ throughout the New Testament (Acts 3:14; 22:14; 1 Pet 2:18), and that Hebrews 2:3-4 shows that Habakkuk 2 was read messianically in other Christian circles.¹⁶⁴ As well as interpreting the 'righteous one' as Christ, this interprets 'ἐκ πίστεως' in the former part of Romans 1:17 as referring to Christ's faithfulness, which empowers believers to live faithfully ('εἰς πίστιν'). This reading coheres with interpreting 'πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ' in Romans 3:22 as referring to the faithfulness of Christ.¹⁶⁵ If the phrase in 3:22 refers to Christ's faithfulness, then it seems likely a similar reading is present here. Such an interpretation is also supported by the close parallel between the phrase in 3:22 and 1:17. 'ἐκ πίστεως' in 1:17 parallels 'διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ' and 'εἰς πίστιν' in 1:17 parallels 'εἰς πάντας τοὺς πιστεύοντες' in 3:22. Paul's focus, then, is on God's action in Christ, rather than its implications for believers. Even if the conventional reading is followed, Romans 1:16-17 is clearly related to Paul's eschatological perspective. Paul announces God's salvific activity in the present and quotes a text relevant for the end-time community.

In summary, Romans 1:16-17, Paul's introduction and transition to the letter body, positions Paul's Gospel firmly in the context of apocalyptic eschatology. Paul focuses on God's salvific actions in the present era, claiming that God's end-time activity had begun to take place. As well as employing vocabulary indicative of an eschatological age, Paul quotes from an eschatological passage which was also drawn on by the Qumran covenanters. These verses set the scene for Paul's development of apocalyptic eschatology throughout the letter.

The Civic Setting of Paul's Letter to the Romans

While interpreters have long been sensitive to the Jewish context of Paul's letters, more recent interpreters have reminded the scholarly guild that the Hellenistic and Roman background is also important for understanding Paul's theology.¹⁶⁶ Much work has focused on finding parallels for Paul's life and thought within movements

Campbell, *The Rhetoric of Righteousness in Romans 3:21-26*, JSNTSup, ed. David Hill (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 204-213; Stowers, *Rereading Romans*, 198-202.

¹⁶⁴ For further support, see Campbell, *Rhetoric of Righteousness*, 209-213.

¹⁶⁵ See the later discussion in chapter four, where I argue for a subjective-genitive reading of 'πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ'.

¹⁶⁶ For social features of Paul's environment, see Meeks, *First Urban Christians*.

and texts of antiquity. We are frequently reminded that Paul was a citizen of more than one world; he was a Jew and a Hellenist, as well as a Roman citizen.¹⁶⁷

It is also equally true that the recipients of Paul's letters were part of different social, cultural and religious worlds. Paul was a 'minister to the gentiles' (Rom 1:5; 15:16; Gal 1:15-16), and the gentiles to whom he wrote shared in the broader assumptions and perceptions of pagan society. Their acceptance of the Gospel produced inevitable tension between their former lives and their new life 'in Christ'.

Paul wrote Romans to a group of Christians in Rome, encouraging the gentile Christians there to live in peace with their Jewish brethren.¹⁶⁸ He was conscious of the centrality of Rome within antiquity, as well as its significance for his mission (Rom 1:8b; 15:23-24). Rome was the political, commercial and religious hub of the Empire. It was also the home of the emperor, and the centre of Roman imperial ideology, which involved the concentration of religious titles and roles around the person of the emperor. Although Rome accepted new religious ideas and movements, it expelled religious movements, and other groups, that threatened its identity or security. As a new religious movement, albeit within Judaism, the early Christians were liable to experience conflict with the Empire. One form of this conflict was ideological, and found in the Christian rejection of imperial ideology. This section of the chapter sketches the social, political, and religious framework of Rome and the relationship of Rome with its residents, which provides a crucial context for understanding political features in Paul's letter to the Romans.

¹⁶⁷ For Paul's Jewish roots, see Phil 3:4-6. Paul wrote, of course, in Greek, showing his debt to the Hellenized world, and Acts records his Roman citizenship (Acts 16:37; 22:25-28), a detail which is probably accurate. For the three facets of Paul, see Ben Witherington, *The Paul Quest: The Renewed Search for the Jew of Tarsus* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 52-88.

¹⁶⁸ He address his letter to 'all God's beloved in Rome' (1:7), whose faith is known throughout the world (1:8). Although some later MSS lack this address, this was probably a result of a scribe's effort to universalise the letter. Few scholars deny that Paul originally sent this letter to Rome. For an exception, see Manson, who argues it was sent to a number of churches as well as functioning as Paul's 'manifesto'; Manson, "St. Paul's Letter to the Romans," 3-15.

The Roman Metropolis

Rome in the Ancient World

The city of Rome is mentioned eight times in the New Testament,¹⁶⁹ but the rule of Rome leaves a mark on its every page. The Roman Empire maintained good roads and peace throughout the Mediterranean, allowing Christianity to spread its message of a crucified messiah. Roman rulers and magistrates oversaw the regions through which the Christians spread and early Christians would have frequently witnessed the movement of Roman troops throughout city and country, wherever in the Empire they happened to be. Within Acts, Paul's imprisonment in Rome is probably intended to signify a fulfilment of 1:6, so that Rome represents 'the ends of the earth'. Several of Paul's epistles may have also been written from Rome, including Philippians, Colossians and Philemon. 2 Timothy also claims to have been written by Paul while in Rome and there is an ancient association of Hebrews with the city. In Revelation (14:8; 16:19; 17:5; 18:2, 10, 21) and 1 Peter (5:13), 'Babylon' probably signifies the city of Rome. Rome's significance within the ancient world was not simply geographical, but political, commercial, and religious.

Politically, Rome was the seat of the imperial government, home for the emperor and the Senate. The emperor had his own personal residence in Rome,¹⁷⁰ and the 'praetorian guard' was also resident there, guarding the emperor and his interests. Although its power was limited under the Empire, the Senate also met in Rome to discuss administrative matters and advise the emperor.¹⁷¹ Rome was also a training ground for the bureaucrats of the Empire. The political 'progression' of the ancient elite involved the famous *cursus honorum*, in which youths from noble families would follow the path to honour.¹⁷² The stages of the *cursus honorum* included positions which involved supervision and leadership of territories throughout the

¹⁶⁹ Acts 18:2; 19:21; 23:11; 28:14, 16; Rom 1:7, 15, and 2 Tim 1:17.

¹⁷⁰ Not that the emperor always used it. The emperor could join troops at war, or rule from elsewhere, as in the exceptional case of Tiberius who spent the last eleven years of his reign in Capri, see Martin Goodman, *The Roman World 44 BC - AD 180* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), 47-52.

¹⁷¹ See Goodman, *Roman World*, 94-96.

¹⁷² See James S. Jeffers, *The Greco-Roman World of the New Testament: Exploring the Background of Early Christianity* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 182-183, 298; Goodman, *Roman World*, 23-24.

empire, such as the stages of *Legate* and *Prefect*, and also positions within Rome, such as the coveted *Consulship*.

Commercial decisions relating to the transfer of goods in the Empire were also made in Rome. Economic transactions took place within the framework of laws and tariffs established by Roman law. The large population of the city also meant that Rome imported massive amounts of grain to feed the populace, as well as more luxury consumer goods, and so created industry throughout the Mediterranean. Although a lot of trade took place within the city,¹⁷³ its imports vastly outweighed its exports.¹⁷⁴

Rome was also religiously central throughout the Empire.¹⁷⁵ Rome had always been a sacred space as well as a secular one.¹⁷⁶ The myth of Romulus and Remus emphasised the divine traits of Rome's founders and the assistance of the gods in establishing the city.¹⁷⁷ Romulus and Remus were descendents of Aeneas (son of Venus) and (in some sources) sons of the war god Mars.¹⁷⁸ At the end of his life, Romulus was taken up by the gods and declared the god Quirinus. The Pomerium, a sacred boundary which enclosed the city and indicated the protection of the gods was also connected to the myth of Romulus and Remus. Within the Roman mythology, Romulus and Remus created a furrow which represented the boundaries of Rome, a typical practice for the founding of colonies.¹⁷⁹ The sacred space within the

¹⁷³ John E. Stambaugh, *The Ancient Roman City* (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1988), 142-143.

¹⁷⁴ Ugo Enrico Paoli, *Rome: Its People, Life and Customs*, trans. R. D. Macnaghten, (London: Longmans, Green & Co. Ltd., 1963), 153.

¹⁷⁵ Price notes that, 'Roman religion had also been closely linked with the city of Rome and its boundaries.' S. R. F. Price, "The Place of Religion: Rome in the Early Empire," in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, volume 10, Alan K. Bowman, Edward Champlin, and Andrew Lintott, 812

¹⁷⁶ For a general description of Rome, see Valerie Hope, "The City of Rome: capital and symbol," in *Experiencing Rome: Culture, Identity and Power in the Roman Empire*, ed. Janet Huskinson, 63-93 (London: Routledge, 2000).

¹⁷⁷ Price, "Place of Religion," 814-817. The myth of Romulus and Remus is preserved in Livy (1.3.1-1.17), but is also found in other sources. For a description which takes an account of the different sources, see Jenny March, *Cassell Dictionary of Classical Mythology* (London: Cassell & Co., 1998), 346-347.

¹⁷⁸ Although Livy notes the possibility that Mars was not in fact the real Father, other authors took for granted the divine origin of Rome's founders (Verg, *Aen*, 1.272; 6.756f). The war-god Mars, Father of the twins, gives us a clue to the way in which Rome asserted and maintained its power. Wengst points out that some Roman coins associate Mars with peace, indicating that the latter was maintained by means of War, *Pax Romana*, 11-13.

¹⁷⁹ Stambaugh, *Ancient Roman City*, 9.

Pomerium meant that no burials could take place within the boundaries, except for in exceptional circumstances.¹⁸⁰ Political decisions were deliberately made within the Pomerium to ensure the blessing of the gods.

The People of Rome

The centrality of Rome within the Empire meant that it was, ‘one of the most densely populated cities the world has ever known.’¹⁸¹ Rome itself probably had about one million inhabitants.¹⁸² A very small minority held the power in Rome, and ruled over the rest of the populace. The minority included the Senatorial and Equestrian classes, as well as the Emperor himself. The majority of the people, however, were poor immigrants who had entered Rome as slaves or came to find their fortune.¹⁸³ Only a few native Romans remained. The resentment in the city towards the foreign immigrants was expressed by Juvenal, with his classic lines;

For years now Syrian Orontes has poured its Sewerage into our native Tiber –
It lingo and manners, its flutes, its outlandish harps with their transverse
strings, its native tambourines and the whores who hang out round the race-
course.¹⁸⁴

The immigrants who came to Rome typically stuck together and created their own living spaces within the city. Different groups lived in different areas, with many foreigners living outside of the Pomerium. Foreigners brought with them their religious beliefs and cultural values which, despite the homogenising tendency of Hellenization, could often be quite alien to Roman sensibilities. Nevertheless, foreign religions were generally accepted within the city.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁰ Paoli, *Rome*, 131.

¹⁸¹ Stambaugh, *Ancient Roman City*, 90.

¹⁸² Walters, *Ethnic Issues*, 7. In a footnote to this figure, Walters explains that estimation is made from the ‘grain dole’ granted to the citizens of the city, and then allowances are made for the majority non-citizen population of Rome.

¹⁸³ For a thorough discussion, see La Piana, G., “Foreign Groups in Rome during the First Centuries of the Empire,” *HTR* 20, 4 (1927), 183-403.

¹⁸⁴ See Juv, *Sat.* III, 60ff. Trans. Peter Green, *Juvenal: The Sixteen Satires* (England: Penguin Books, 1967), 89.

¹⁸⁵ See below.

An important meeting place for ethnic and religious groups in Rome was the voluntary association.¹⁸⁶ Voluntary associations had a long history within the Roman Empire, and the earliest legal reference to their existence is found in the Roman Twelve Tables (table eight).¹⁸⁷ They can be divided into three different types; domestic, professional, and religious.¹⁸⁸ Within these groups, members socialised, experienced community and engaged in cultic acts. Although only some groups were organised explicitly around a particular god, all associations included religious rituals for their members.¹⁸⁹ The poor were a lot more involved in associations than the rich¹⁹⁰ because, as well as providing a good funeral,¹⁹¹ voluntary associations allowed the poor to exercise leadership roles and attain a certain degree of honour. Cohen compares the organisation of voluntary associations to, ‘miniature cities (*poleis*)... providing the membership a sense of power and control that usually eluded them in the real world.’¹⁹² Voluntary associations could include any number from about fifteen to one hundred, though some professional associations included even more.¹⁹³

¹⁸⁶ A variety of names are connected to these groups, including ‘collegia,’ ‘clubs,’ and ‘guilds.’ For a discussion of ‘voluntary association’ as an appropriate nomenclature see the discussion in S.G. Wilson, “Voluntary Associations: An Overview,” *In Voluntary Associations in the Graeco-Roman World*, ed. John S. Kloppenborg and Stephen G. Wilson, 1-15 (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 1-2. For a good general overview, see Kloppenborg’s own essay in the collection; “Collegia and *Thiasoi*: Issues in function, taxonomy and membership,” 16-30.

¹⁸⁷ Wendy Cotter, “The Collegia and Roman Law: State restrictions on voluntary associations, 64 BCE - 200 CE,” in *Voluntary Associations in the Graeco-Roman World*, ed. John S. Kloppenborg and Stephen G. Wilson, 74-89 (London and New York: Routledge, 1996) 75.

¹⁸⁸ Kloppenborg, “Collegia,” 23-25. Breaking with other studies, Kloppenborg dismisses the existence of collegia organised solely for the provision of burials (20-23). According to Kloppenborg, ‘burial societies’ were a ‘legal fiction’ developed within the empire which did not reflect how the groups saw themselves.

¹⁸⁹ E.A. Judge, *The Social Patterns of the Christian Groups in the First Century*, (London: The Tyndale Press, 1960) 40-43; Robert L. Wilkens, *The Christians as the Romans saw them*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1984), 36.

¹⁹⁰ Kloppenborg, “Collegia,” 23.

¹⁹¹ Walters, *Ethnic Issues*, 17 suggests that the provision of a good burial was a strong motive for joining these groups.

¹⁹² Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*, Library of Early Christianity, ed. Wayne A. Meeks, (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: The Westminster Press), 116. Cf., Kloppenborg, “Collegia,” 26.

¹⁹³ Kloppenborg, “Collegia,” 25-26.

One of the largest foreign groups within Rome was the Jews. Most scholars estimate that Jews in first century Rome numbered 40–50,000.¹⁹⁴ The origins of the Jewish community in Rome are difficult to date with certainty, but a reference in Valerius Maximus refers to their (temporary) expulsion from Rome in 139 BCE, indicating a second century presence.¹⁹⁵ A large number of Jews were also brought to Rome as slaves in 63 BCE, following Pompey's conquest of Judaea.¹⁹⁶ Although they came as slaves, 'many were manumitted to form the first Jewish community of any significant size there.'¹⁹⁷ Many of the Jews in the first century descended from these freedmen and would have been freedman themselves. According to Philo (*leg ad Caium*, 155.157), the Jews brought to Rome were settled into an area known as Transtiberinum, 'one of the most economically depressed areas in Rome'.¹⁹⁸ Later synagogue remains show that other areas in Rome were also inhabited, including the Campus Martius and Subura Capena, but the Transtiberinum was probably the home for one of the largest Jewish communities.¹⁹⁹

Evidence from Cicero shows that at the time he wrote a sizeable and influential community of Jews existed in Rome. Cicero mentions this in his defence of Flaccus, who was accused of confiscating Jewish gold in Asia Minor that had been set aside for the temple in Jerusalem. In his defence of the case, Cicero appeals to popular prejudice against the Jews, and accuses Laelius, who is bringing the accusation, of encouraging Jews to come along and 'pressure' the jury;

¹⁹⁴ Raymond E. Brown and John P. Meier, *Antioch and Rome: New Testament Cradles of Catholic Christianity*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1983), 94; Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, xlv-xlvi; Jeffers, *Conflict at Rome*, 10.

¹⁹⁵ Valerius Maximus may not be wholly reliable as he wrote two hundred years after the events he records, and his own references are recorded in two later sources (with slightly different information). The two sources are quoted, with commentary, in Louis H. Feldman, and Meyer Reinhold, eds., *Jewish Life and Thought among Greeks and Romans: Primary Readings* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1996), 313-314. One is the epitome of Julius Paris, from the fourth century CE, and the other is the epitome of Januarius Nepotianus, from the fourth or fifth century CE. Leon argues, however, that the text indicates that the Jews were visitors to Rome, rather than a settled group. In that case, it does not tell us about the existence of an established community, but only about early restrictions of Jewish rites in Rome; Harry J. Leon, *The Jews of Ancient Rome*, (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1960), 3-4.

¹⁹⁶ Jos. *Ant.* 14:77; *War.* 1.155.

¹⁹⁷ E. Mary Smallwood, *The Jews Under Roman Rule: From Pompey to Diocletian*, SJLA (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1976), 2.

¹⁹⁸ Jeffers, *Conflict at Rome*, 10-11.

¹⁹⁹ Leon, *Jews of Ancient Rome*, 136-38; Walters, *Ethnic Issues*, 30-31.

You procured this place and that crowd, Laelius, for this trial. You know what a big crowd it is, how they stick together, how influential they are in informal assemblies.²⁰⁰

Though allowance must be made for exaggeration in the courtroom context, Cicero's accusation rests on the premise that the large Jewish population in Rome influenced political decisions.

The majority of Jews in Rome were fairly poor. As well as their living centres, this is suggested by evidence from the Jewish catacombs of Rome.²⁰¹ The inscriptions and unadorned burial places show that the majority of Jews were of low social status, although some exceptions did exist.²⁰²

Although other foreigners also lived together in groups, the Jews resisted assimilation more so than other foreign groups because their religious practices required a certain amount of separation. The Jews retained a commitment to the Torah not only by living together, but also by regularly meeting in synagogues. The synagogues functioned as forms of voluntary associations, though they had also been granted special privileges by the Romans.²⁰³

Synagogue life in Rome was decentralised and each synagogue seems to have had a relative amount of freedom. This is in contrast to Alexandria and Antioch, where the synagogues were overseen by a central committee. Nevertheless, Roman synagogues shared a similar structure. As Wiefel points out, 'Many designations for institutions and offices appear again and again, indicating an essentially similar organizational structure.'²⁰⁴

Richardson points out that five of the synagogues known from inscriptions come from the time of Augustus, and so were present at the time of Paul. He also argues that these synagogues were probably buildings, and points to the existence of other

²⁰⁰ Feldman, *Jewish Life and Thought*, 359.

²⁰¹ Although later than the first century, these can be used as a 'trajectory' for assessing the first century status of Jewish groups.

²⁰² Leon, *Jews of Ancient Rome*, 136-138; Smallwood, *Jews under Roman Rule*, 132-133; Walters, *Ethnic Issues*, 31-33.

²⁰³ 'Synagogues as collegia had a special place in the early Roman Empire; privileges, going beyond what other collegia could claim, were carefully defined.' Peter Richardson, "Early Synagogues as Collegia in the Diaspora and Palestine", in *Voluntary Associations in the Graeco-Roman World*, ed. John S. Kloppenborg and Stephen G. Wilson, 90-109 (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 103.

²⁰⁴ Wiefel, "Jewish Community," 90-91. Wiefel also offers a description of these offices.

synagogue buildings throughout the Diaspora, as well as the Ostia synagogue building which existed at an early stage.²⁰⁵ Rutgers, however, notes that the Ostia and Delos sites provide the only synagogue remains which could possibly be dated in the first century and that, 'only during the second or third century C.E. did an architecture develop that made buildings distinguishable as synagogues.'²⁰⁶ First century synagogues, then, were probably gatherings in the houses of Jews. This is analogous to many of the voluntary associations and also to the early house churches, which were probably dependent on this synagogue model.²⁰⁷

Christians in Rome

Early Christianity in Rome originated in the synagogues, and only later spread among gentiles.²⁰⁸ This, in fact, was the typical manner in which early Christian communities arose. For Jewish believers coming to Rome, synagogues were the natural forum to announce their new faith (or the revision of their old faith).

At an early stage, however, Christians began moving away from the synagogues into their own house churches. Nero's prosecution of the 'Christians' following the fire of Rome illustrates that a few years after Paul wrote Christians were seen as a sect separate from Jews.²⁰⁹ Romans 16 also provides evidence that gentile Christians met in house churches separate from the Jews. Although Christians initially attended synagogues, at an early date they met together and developed alongside the Jews. It is difficult to imagine that Christians usurped a synagogue meeting to discuss 'Christ and his benefits' when Christianity was such a contentious issue for first century Jews. First century synagogues met in houses, so early Christians naturally adapted

²⁰⁵ Peter Richardson, "Augustan-Era Synagogues in Rome," in *Judaism and Christianity in First-Century Rome*, ed. Karl P. Donfried and Peter Richardson, 17-29 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), 19-23.

²⁰⁶ L. V. Rutgers, "Diaspora Synagogue Archaeology in the Greco-Roman World," in *The Hidden Heritage of Diaspora Judaism*, Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology, ed. Tj. Baarda, A. van der kooij and A. S. van der Woude, 97-123 (Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 1998), 103. See also Jeffers, *Conflict in Rome*.

²⁰⁷ Walters, *Ethnic Issues*, 27.

²⁰⁸ For the origins of Christianity in Rome, see esp. Peter Lampe, *Die Stadtrömischen Christen in den ersten beiden Jahrhunderten*, WUNT, ed. Martin Hengel and Otfried Hofius (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Peter Siebeck), 1987), 1-4; Walters, *Ethnic Issues*, 5-6; Jeffers, *Conflict at Rome*, 3-47.

²⁰⁹ For repressions of Christianity at this time, see Tacitus, *Ann.*, 15:44; Suet., *Nero*, 16:2

the same form.²¹⁰ Like the synagogues, the house churches were types of voluntary associations, although they also incorporated characteristics which distinguished them from other voluntary associations.²¹¹

House churches were central throughout the whole of early Christianity.²¹² Not just in Rome, but across the Empire, Christians met in homes to break bread, sing hymns, and offer worship to God and the risen Christ. Acts of the Apostles records some of the first Christians in Jerusalem who, while continuing to go to the temple, 'broke bread at home' (2:46). In the story of Peter's release from prison by an angel, Peter goes to Mary's house where a meeting of Christians is taking place to pray for his release (12:12).²¹³ The letters of Paul provide the best evidence for the phenomenon. As well as the household-codes, which point in the direction of house churches, explicit mention is made of house churches in a number of letters (1 Cor 16:19; Col 4:15; Phil. 2). Even when mention is not explicitly made, it is natural to infer that the early Christians met in houses, regardless of when the final 'separation' from the synagogue took place. Malherbe argues that house churches were a crucial part of Paul's missionary strategy; 'Paul's missionary practice was to convert entire households after his ejection from the synagogues and then to use these houses as the basis for his further activity.'²¹⁴ The house churches allowed Christians to develop their own styles of faith and worship.²¹⁵ Archaeological evidence supports the

²¹⁰ Rutgers, "Diaspora Synagogue Archaeology," 103; Walters, *Ethnic Issues*, 27.

²¹¹ House churches, unlike voluntary associations, were connected to an international movement. For a discussion of other differences cf., Wayne O. McCready, "Ekklesia and Voluntary Associations," in *Voluntary Associations in the Graeco-Roman World*, ed. John S. Kloppenborg and Stephen G. Wilson, 59-73 (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 63-64; Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 78-80.

²¹² For house churches in early Christianity, see Floyd V. Filson, "The Significance of the Early House Churches," *JBL* 58 (1939), 105-112; Robert Banks, *Paul's Idea of Community: The Early House Churches in their Historical Setting* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980); Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *St. Paul's Corinth: Texts and Archaeology* (Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Glazier, Inc., 1983), 153-161; John Reumann, "One Lord, One Faith, One God, but many House Churches," in *Common Life in the Early Church: Essays Honoring Graydon F. Snyder*, Julian V. Hills (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Trinity Press International, 1998), 106-117.

²¹³ Cf., also Acts 16:15, 31ff; 18:1-8.

²¹⁴ Abraham J. Malherbe, *Social Aspects of Early Christianity*, 2d ed. enl. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 68-69.

²¹⁵ Filson, "Significance," 109-110.

existence of early house churches, showing that some later churches were built upon former houses, or that houses were reconstructed into churches.²¹⁶

Romans 16 provides evidence for a number of independent house churches in Rome, several of which were gentile and so separate from the synagogues. The reference to the church which 'meets in the house of Prisca and Aquila' (τὴν κατ' οἶκον αὐτῶν ἐκκλησίαν) is followed by a list of names which can be sorted into different house churches.²¹⁷ As well as the house church based around Prisca and Aquila (vss.3-5), two further house groups are indicated in vss.14-15. Independent house churches allowed different perspectives to develop among these Christian groups,²¹⁸ and assisted the development of the divisions mentioned in Romans 14 – 15. The second century church at Rome suggests that this situation continued; although Ignatius mentions a central ecclesiastical authority in every other church he addresses, he does not refer to one in Rome.²¹⁹ A situation in Rome in which house churches were separate, though also in contact, parallels what we know about the Jewish community in Rome.

Caragounis has recently questioned this consensus, arguing that a 'central city church' existed for Rome as for other cities and that house churches functioned as 'outreach posts in different parts of the metropolis.'²²⁰ Caragounis criticises the usual arguments for independent house churches in Rome. He points out, first of all, that the lack of *ekklesia* in the preface to Romans is no proof that Roman Christianity was divided into house groups, as Paul's use is inconsistent and *ekklesia* is also absent in the greetings of Philippians, Ephesians, and Colossians.²²¹ Caragounis is correct to point out the faulty reasoning here. His second argument attacks the claim which

²¹⁶ Filson, "Significance," 105-12. For a discussion of archaeological development of house churches into church buildings, see L. Michael White, *Building God's House in the Roman World: Architectural Adaption among Pagans, Jews, and Christians*, The ASOR Library of Biblical and Near Eastern Archaeology (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1990).

²¹⁷ Brändle, "Formation," 124-25; Lane, "Social Perspectives on Roman Christianity," 208-213; Wiefel, "Jewish Community," 94-95; Lampe, *Christen*, 301-302.

²¹⁸ Filson, "Significance," 110; Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 76.

²¹⁹ Lane, "Social Perspectives on Roman Christianity," 213.

²²⁰ Chrys C. Caragounis, "From Obscurity to Prominence: the Development of the Roman Church between Romans and 1 Clement," in *Judaism and Christianity in First-Century Rome*, ed. Karl P. Donfried and Peter Richardson, 245-279 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), 257.

²²¹ Caragounis, "Obscurity," 253.

concludes from the diverse and decentralised nature of synagogues in Rome that the house church structure of early Christianity in Rome was analogous. This supposition, argues Caragounis, ‘does not do justice to the explosive character of the Christian message.’²²² Caragounis believes that Christianity would have quickly left the Jewish fold in Rome. Although this is partly correct, and the Claudius expulsion would have separated the church and synagogue even more,²²³ this does not mean that Christians would have quickly united with each other. Differences between Christian groups, particularly vis-à-vis the attitude towards Judaism, probably kept groups separate. Thirdly, Caragounis thinks that only one house church is clearly mentioned in Romans 16, which is the house church of Prisca and Aquila. Romans 16:10, 15 are not necessarily references to house churches and, even if they were, there are another fourteen names which do not fit into a house church schema. However, vs.14 and vs.15 certainly suggests separate groups, and the most likely explanation of this is house groups. Caragounis finds it difficult to imagine how the letter would have been passed on from one church to another if each house church were as separate as many maintain.²²⁴ Separation, however, need not imply a lack of contact.

Caragounis’ argument against a plurality of house churches in Rome is unconvincing. Further, his supposition of a single church in other cities assumes, in a reverse form of the error he criticises, that the address to the *ekklesia* of the other cities necessarily means that the Christians all met as one body within the city.²²⁵ Caragounis’ use of 1 Corinthians 14:23 demonstrates at most only that the gathering of the whole church together could take place. What is significant is that Paul points to this not as the normal characteristic of church gatherings, but as an occasional event.²²⁶ This suggests that in Corinth as elsewhere, Christians only occasionally gathered together and usually met in house-groups for worship and teaching. In

²²² Caragounis, “Obscurity,” 254.

²²³ See the following discussion.

²²⁴ Caragounis, “Obscurity,” 255-257.

²²⁵ See Caragounis’ own discussion of *ekklesia* in “Obscurity,” 257-58.

²²⁶ As Dunn states, ‘The implication of 1 Cor. 16.19 set alongside 14.23 (referring to “the whole church meeting together”) is probably that church gatherings consisted of more regular small house groups interspersed with less frequent (weekly, monthly?) gatherings of “the whole church.”’; Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 541.

Rome, however, there is no evidence that a common meeting place for Christians existed.

Christianity in Rome included a range of figures within the lower social classes of the Roman world. Prosopographical evidence from Romans 16, analysed by Lampe and also by Jeffers,²²⁷ indicates that more than many of the Christians listed were probably from the east. Christian communities also existed in poorer areas, mainly outside of the Pomerium.²²⁸ Within Romans itself, there is evidence for both richer and poorer Christians.²²⁹ The admonitions to almsgiving (Rom 12:8, 13) assume the presence of those who could give and those who needed help. The reference to paying duties (13:6), which would only apply to those involved in commerce, and Paul's request for support from Rome for his mission (15:24) indicate the presence of some wealthier Christians, as does the admonition to 'not think of yourself more highly than you ought to think' (12:3).

Imperial Ideology and the City of Rome

The ruler of Rome and the head of the Empire was, of course, the emperor himself. In league with the Senate and his advisors, the emperor made decisions on the management of the provinces, the protection and expansion of the empire, and the economic relationships between the provinces. The political and pragmatic activities of the emperor, however, were associated with an ideology that supported the emperor's legitimacy. The *practice* of rule combined with an ideology concerning the *nature* of imperial rule.

Beginning with Augustus, the emperors exploited associations of power and divinity that encouraged a 'high' view of their own legitimacy. The imperial ideology of the first century forms an important background for early Christianity, not least because it conflicted with the theological values and norms of early Christian belief.

Imperial ideology took for granted the ancient association of religion and politics, in which ancient 'politicians' were also religious leaders. Imperial ideology was

²²⁷ Lampe, *Christen*, 124-153 ; Jeffers, *Conflict at Rome*, 18-20.

²²⁸ Lampe, *Christen*, 10-52. Lampe uses a variety of methods in determining the location of Christians in Rome, including analysing local tradition, early burial sites, the Jewish quarters, tituli, and contemporary literature.

²²⁹ Lampe, *Christen*, 63-65.

established with the Augustan settlement, and developed by the later Julio-Claudian emperors. Nero, emperor at the time Paul wrote, is depicted in the sources as claiming too much authority and divinity for his own (or the Empire's) good.²³⁰ When Paul wrote Romans, imperial ideology had become pervasive and insidious, and Christians would not be able to escape its civic manifestations.

Religion and Politics in Antiquity

In the post-Enlightenment era, religion and politics are seen as different spheres of life, dealing with different concerns and areas. 'Religion' is viewed as a matter of belief and ethics, while 'politics' is concerned with the regulation of public services and space.²³¹ Applying such a distinction to the ancient world, however, anachronistically separates closely connected phenomena. The word 'religion,' and its conceptual baggage, is a modern construct created to allow scholars to study complex phenomena of belief-structures. Further, although religion is often seen as 'fundamentally' centred on believing certain things to be true, this is by no means the emphasis in the ancient world.²³² There is, in fact, no equivalent word for this use of 'religion' in either Greek or Latin.²³³ In speaking of ancient 'religion', then, we need to be clear that the phenomenon was radically different from how religion is understood today.

A definition of religion more helpful in studying the ancient world is found in Gager's work;

Religion... is that particular mode of world-building that seeks to ground its world in a sacred order, a realm that justifies and explains the arena of human existence in terms of the eternal nature of things.²³⁴

²³⁰ i.e., Nero not only endorsed imperial ideology, but went beyond it.

²³¹ Stowers, *Rereading of Romans*, 26-27.

²³² Denis Feeney, *Literature and Religion at Rome: Cultures, Context, and Beliefs*, Roman Literature and its Contexts, ed. Denis Feeney and Stephen Hinds (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 12-46.

²³³ 'Except in the last phase of paganism... there was no traditional religion which was an entity with a theology and an organization. Classical Greek has no word which covers religion as we use the term.' A. D. Nock, *Conversion: The Old and the New in Religion from Alexander the Great to Augustine of Hippo*, (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1933), 10.

²³⁴ Gager, *Kingdom and Community*, 10

Although this Marxist-influenced definition of religion assumes a hermeneutic of suspicion, it also helpfully points to the connection of the sacred order with the secular sphere (political and social) within religious practices.

A useful model for understanding ancient religion is also offered by Malina, in his 1986 article, 'Religion in the world of Paul.'²³⁵ Malina argues that religion was never conceived of in antiquity as an individual's search for truth, but was always 'group-embedded', either in the domestic or in the political sphere. Domestic and political forms of religion could be involuntary or voluntary, but in both cases religion was heavily communal. Involuntary religious involvement arose from birth into a certain family, or residence within a specific region. Voluntary religious practices, on the other hand, involved establishing 'fictive' domestic or political bonds.²³⁶ Although he probably underplays the extent to which existential questions drove people to the gods, Malina's main contention, that religion was embedded within broader social and political groups, closely fits the picture of religion in the ancient sources.

Within the ancient world, 'political' forms of religion were practiced in the public sphere. Social and cultural assumptions connected power and rule with divinity, and religious leaders were connected with political leaders. Every ancient authority saw himself (it was typically a 'him') as ruling as or on behalf of a god, a view held in Jerusalem as well as in Rome. In fact, up until the Enlightenment, we know of no political group that existed without religion.²³⁷

Within Rome, then, all officials were expected to play religious as well as political roles. Religious views and activities served to publicly justify the reality of Rome rule throughout the Mediterranean.²³⁸ The mythological tales of the origins of Rome emphasised that Rome, which had been established *by* gods, was a community *under* the gods. Rome ruled because the gods had granted it the power to rule.

Because Rome's rule was represented as a co-operation between men and gods, the administrative process and senatorial meetings within the city involved religious

²³⁵ Bruce J. Malina, "'Religion' in the World of Paul," *BTB* 16 (1986), 92-101.

²³⁶ Malina, "'Religion'," 93-94.

²³⁷ Some would argue that even post-Enlightenment political forms involve implicit religious assumptions and claims (contra the idealistic separation of 'church and state'), but in the ancient world, such claims were overt. In antiquity, religion was *explicitly* involved with politics.

²³⁸ Interpretations which view Roman religious practices *solely* as legitimising Roman ruler, however, are unconvincing.

rituals and language. Magistrates and leaders at every level were required to contribute in religious ceremonies, as well as perform rituals particular to their own positions. MacMullen notes;

it must be remembered how far from purely secular were most elected officials in cities of Greek or Roman deviation. This year to the gods, the next to the city - such was the pattern of service rendered by the local aristocracy.²³⁹

Roman Temples functioned as political centres. During the Republic, leaders of Rome led or initiated the ceremonies of *Lecstisternium*, where gods were sat around a Temple in the Forum, and *supplicatio*, in response to some crisis.²⁴⁰ Temples also provided a place for Senators and other magisterial orders to meet and discuss governmental business.²⁴¹ Priesthood was also central in the Republic and Empire. In the early Empire, priesthood became an increasingly prized object for the elite, who realised the political power which was associated with it.²⁴²

Both in the Republic and the Empire, divination played an important role in Roman political decisions.²⁴³ Three classes of diviners existed, each linked to the public rule of Rome. The *augurs* interpreted the flights of birds and natural phenomenon (such as lightning) and were consulted at public assemblies in the Republic. The *haruspices* interpreted the entrails of the animals slaughtered in public sacrifices, reading omens in the placement of the entrails. The third group, the *quindecimviri*, interpreted the collection of Sibylline Oracles in Rome. The consultation of the diviners ensured that the gods were actively involved in the running of the state.²⁴⁴ This reflected the Roman belief that, 'divine benevolence (secured by human effort)

²³⁹ Ramsay MacMullen, *Paganism in the Roman Empire* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1981), 43

²⁴⁰ Staumbaugh, *Ancient Roman City*, 218-219.

²⁴¹ Staumbaugh, *Ancient Roman City*, 218-219.

²⁴² For an account of how priesthood functioned ideologically at this time, see Richard Gordon, "From Republic to Principate: Priesthood, Religion and Ideology," In *Pagan Priests: Religion and Power in the Ancient World*, ed. Mary Beard and John North, 179-198. (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd.).

²⁴³ For what follows, see J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *Continuity and Change in Roman Religion* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 7-12.

²⁴⁴ Liebeschuetz, however, notes that paradoxically divination allowed the state to decide its actions on purely secular grounds, as they could be sure they were not irritating the gods; Liebeschuetz, *Continuity and Change*, 12. Nevertheless, it is significant that rulers felt it necessary to 'check' with the gods in the first place.

was essential to the success of the state; Rome's history in other words was determined by the actions of men and gods together.²⁴⁵

Roman leaders also encouraged and initiated public religious festivities and activities. These included festivals celebrating Roman military activity (connected with Mars) and festivals linked with agriculture.²⁴⁶ Such religious activity was not simply a response to public desire, although it included that, but was also a necessary part of establishing and maintaining Roman rule, presenting it as connected to the gods. Many of the Roman elite recognised this function of Roman religion, admitting that even if Roman gods were not true, it was politically expedient to act as if they were.²⁴⁷

Religion in the Roman Empire, then, was connected to politics and society. Classical authors recognised the importance of religion as a socially cohesive institution, even if some of them privately expressed scepticism towards its claims. Polybius, for example, notes the importance of religion for the Roman Republic;

But the quality in which the Roman commonwealth is most distinctly superior is in my opinion the nature of their religious convictions. I believe that it is the very thing which among other peoples is an object of reproach, I mean superstition, which maintains the cohesion of the Roman State.²⁴⁸

Imperial Ideology

As the highest Roman official, the emperor, like other Magistrates, acted as a religious official. As a religious official, Augustus reformed and renewed Roman religion throughout his reign.²⁴⁹ He emphasised his restoration of traditional Roman religion in his *Res Gestae* and became a member in each of the four priestly colleges

²⁴⁵ Mary Beard, John North, and Simon Price, *Religions of Rome*, vol. 1, *A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 41.

²⁴⁶ Beard, *Religions of Rome I*, 43-48. For the Republican era, see H. H. Scullard, *Festivals and Ceremonies of the Roman Republic*, *Aspects of Greek and Roman Life*, ed. H. H. Scullard (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd, 1981).

²⁴⁷ Cic. *Nat. D.* 1.2.4; 1.17.61.

²⁴⁸ Livy 4.56.6-7 (Loeb Translation). This passage concludes a section in which Polybius compares Rome with Carthage. He continues by suggesting that the gods were 'introduced' by rulers to 'control' the *hoi polloi*.

²⁴⁹ Franz Altheim, *A History of Roman Religion* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1938); Karl Galinsky, *Augustan Culture: An Interpretative Introduction* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996), 290-294.

to justify this restorative activity.²⁵⁰ His acquisition of the role *Pontifex Maximus* in 12 BCE made him the religious as well as political head of the empire. He also reintroduced ancient Roman rites which had died out, such as the *Fratres Arvales*.²⁵¹ The emperors following Augustus continued to represent themselves as acting in the best interests of Roman religion.

Although Augustus' restoration of Roman religion showed his *pietas* and commitment to religion in the empire, it was his religious innovations which lifted him above other mortals and closer to the gods. Roman conservatism, and political astuteness, prevented Augustus from proclaiming himself as divine,²⁵² but he nevertheless maintained an ideology which connected his reign to the gods. Roman imperial ideology, established by Augustus but continuing throughout the reigns of successive emperors, depicted the emperor a semi-divine and close to the gods.

Roman imperial ideology was a broader phenomenon than the imperial cult.²⁵³ Whereas the latter was characterised by the worship of the emperor among the gods, the former associated the emperor with the gods but without necessarily worshipping him.²⁵⁴ Instead, it encouraged respect and a variety of honours to be paid to the emperor. The imperial cult was more prevalent in the eastern Mediterranean, but imperial ideology was as central in Rome as in the east. Both phenomena were related to the increasing social and political power of the emperor within the Roman

²⁵⁰ Price, "Place of Religion," 824-830.

²⁵¹ Suet, *Aug.*, XXXIX.

²⁵² Fishwick argues that the consequences of Julius Caesar's more overt claims to divine honours led Augustus to be more cautious in their appropriation; Duncan Fishwick, *The Imperial Cult in the Latin West: Studies of the Ruler Cult of the Western Provinces of the Roman Empire* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1987-1991), 56-72.

²⁵³ Oakes also points out that imperial ideology was not confined to the imperial cult; Oakes, *Philippians*, 130. Ideology is used in a neutral sense, to broadly denote the propagation of a world-view. It is not used in the loaded sense adopted by Alistair Kee, "The Imperial Cult: The Unmasking of an Ideology," *SJRS* 6, 2 (1985), 114.

²⁵⁴ Historians frequently conflate these phenomena. This discussion of imperial ideology also draws on studies which are ostensibly focused on the imperial cult. See Lily Ross Taylor, *The Divinity of the Roman Emperor*, PMAPA, ed. Joseph William Hewitt (Middletown, Connecticut: The American Philological Association, 1931); Fishwick, *Imperial Cult in the Latin West*; Martin Percival Charlesworth, "Some Observations on the Ruler-Cult, especially in Rome," *HTR* 28 (1935), 5-44; S. R. F. Price, *Rituals and Power: The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984); Keith Hopkins, "Divine Emperors or the Symbolic Unity of the Roman Empire," in *Conquerors and Slaves: Sociological Studies in Roman History, Vol. 1* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978); Beard, *Religions of Rome I*, 167-210.

world.²⁵⁵ Although imperial ideology was a political phenomenon, it was also a religious reality for Roman residents. Kee's description of the imperial cult as an ideology in the form of a religion, rather than a 'real' religion,²⁵⁶ falsely imposes a modern dichotomy on religion and politics in the ancient world.

While we can study apocalyptic eschatology by analysing the world view and ideas expressed within apocalypses and apocalyptic literature, the sources for the study of Roman imperial ideology are a lot more diffuse. The study of Roman imperial ideology is also complicated because it was not simply a world-view imposed from above onto the residents of the Empire, but involved the adoption and adaptation of the Emperor by the Greco-Roman world.²⁵⁷ Local centres of the empire produced different manifestations of imperial ideology, with large difference existing between east and west. Fears makes a rigorous distinction between 'official' ideology supporting the emperor and the works 'from below'.²⁵⁸ Although this distinction is useful to keep in mind, the discussion here draws on 'unofficial' as well as 'official' sources of the imperial ideology. The aim is not to construct precisely the intended ideology propagated by the emperor and his colleagues, but to highlight the bundle of ideas associated with the emperor which were 'in the air' at the time Paul wrote. Whether officially or unofficially propagated, such ideas were an important background to Paul's writing of Romans.

The 'Augustan settlement' set the scene for the later development of imperial ideology. The Julio-Claudian emperors adopted and adapted Augustus' inheritance. Nero, emperor at the time Paul wrote, went beyond previous manifestations of imperial ideology by proclaiming himself as divine. Imperial ideology is particularly significant for our thesis because apocalyptic themes in Romans conflicted with motifs found in imperial ideology.

²⁵⁵ Gager notes that, 'The one truly novel element in the class structure of the Empire was the immense social power of the emperor,' Gager, *Kingdom and Community*, 97.

²⁵⁶ Kee, "Imperial Cult," 112-128. He argues that, 'the importance of the imperial cult was political rather than religious: its intention was the legitimization of absolute power rather than the worship of the gods,' 122. Despite his misleading contrast between ideology and religion, Kee helpfully points out some of the ways in which early Christianity came into conflict with the imperial cult.

²⁵⁷ For a convincing and detailed argument for this, see Price, *Rituals and Power*.

²⁵⁸ J. Rufus Fears, *Princeps A Diis Electus: The Divine Election of the Emperor as a Political Concept in Rome*, PMAAR (Rome: American Academy in Rome, 1977), 11.

The Augustan Settlement

The rise of the imperial cult and imperial ideology was one of the most important developments to occur in the transition from Republic to Empire. Augustus was crucial in setting the scene for later developments.²⁵⁹ Although later emperors, and perhaps even the later Augustus, emphasised features other than their connection with the gods, imperial ideology lay beneath the surface, ready to emerge when necessary.²⁶⁰ As Ferguson notes, 'it was Augustus who with his exceptional political flair set the general pattern for the future.'²⁶¹

As noted earlier, Augustus represented himself as a restorer of Roman religion, as well as a restorer of the Republic. The name 'Augustus' itself indicated piety and separation to the gods.²⁶² The reality, however, was that Augustus also introduced innovations into Roman religion and the Roman government. The Empire was a different beast than the Republic. As well as restoring older religious rites, Augustus encouraged the development of imperial ideology. The development of this ideology occurred in a variety of ways.

Firstly, Augustus emphasised his devotion and dependence on his patron gods. For Augustus, the god Apollo was his personal protector and the agent who gave him rule. Augustus' devotion to Apollo can be traced to his ideological battle in the late Republic with Antony. Whereas Antony exploited connections with Dionysus, Octavian stressed his relationship with Apollo.²⁶³ In the propaganda surrounding Actium, the eventual winners depicted Dionysus as a reckless, eastern drunk of a god, while Apollo represented ancient Roman virtues. Augustus indicated his devotion by the construction of a temple to Apollo on the Palatine, connected to his own residence.²⁶⁴ In so doing, 'Augustus not only moved his cult into the sacred

²⁵⁹ Price, "Place of Religion," 824-830; Galinsky, *Augustan Culture*, 290-294; Beard, *Religions of Rome I*, 186-196.

²⁶⁰ Indeed, Fears point that divine election surfaced in unstable reigns supports this. It was precisely because such ideology existed beneath the surface of most reigns that emperors could appeal to it; Fears, *Principes*, 317-324.

²⁶¹ John Ferguson, *The Religions of the Roman Empire*, AGRL, ed. H. H. Scullard (London: Thames and Hudson, 1970), 90.

²⁶² *Res Gestae* 9. See Dio Cassius 15, 16, 8 and Suetonius *Aug.* VII for the religious associations of the name.

²⁶³ Paul Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus* (Michigan: Ann Arbor, The University of Michigan Press, 1988), 44-53.

²⁶⁴ Suet. *Aug.* XXIX. Zanker, *Power of Images*, 44-53.

boundary of the city; but he brought the god effectively into his own house.'²⁶⁵

Augustus also issued coins in which he was associated with Apollo, and gave the god a central place in the Secular games of 17 BCE. Although Augustus' recognition of a patron god was not in itself innovative, his association of his own person with Apollo indicated Augustus' close contact to the gods.

Secondly, Augustus encouraged Roman residents to respect and honour the divinity of Julius Caesar, his adopted father. Caesar attained divinity by his apotheosis, and Caesar's divinity allowed Augustus to claim the title *divi Filius*.²⁶⁶ Several papyri and inscriptions from the east include this title,²⁶⁷ but it was also printed on coins throughout the Empire, and so known in Rome. It avoided the actual claim of divinity but still stressed the closest possible connection with the gods.

Thirdly, imperial ideology associated Augustus with traditional Roman virtues, many of which had received deification in Greece and Rome.²⁶⁸ As early as the fourth century, Romans worshipped personifications of virtues.²⁶⁹ Augustus and the emperors following him connected these virtues to their own rule, often choosing attributes to emphasise aspects of their rule.²⁷⁰ Thus, Augustus connected his reign to Victoria,²⁷¹ Pax, Virtus, and Pietas, among others. These virtues were connected to the emperor in coins and temples. Fishwick claims, 'Abstractions were of the greatest political value since they kept the monarch before people's minds by parading his qualities or the blessings conferred by his rule.'²⁷²

Fourthly, Augustus proclaimed his relationship to the gods architecturally. Augustus renovated and built temples in Rome to indicate his piety and relationship with the

²⁶⁵ Beard, *Religions of Rome I*, 198

²⁶⁶ Zanker, *Power of Images*, 33-37.

²⁶⁷ Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, 346-347; Dominique Cuss, *Imperial Cult and Honorary Terms in the New Testament*, Paradosis (Fribourg, Switzerland: The Fribourg University Press, 1974), 71-73.

²⁶⁸ J. Rufus Fears, "The Cult of Virtues and Roman Imperial Ideology," in *ANRW*, 2, 17, 2 (1981), 827-948; Fishwick, *Imperial Cult in the Latin West*, 453-474.

²⁶⁹ Fears, "Cult of Virtues", 828-833.

²⁷⁰ Fears, "Cult of Virtues", 889-910.

²⁷¹ J. Rufus Fears, "The Theology of Victory at Rome," *ANRW*, 2, 17, 2 (1981), 804-808.

²⁷² Fishwick, *Imperial Cult in the Latin West*, 85

gods.²⁷³ In his *Res Gestae*, Augustus emphasises the number of religious buildings he erected in his reign (10; 21; Appendix 2; 3), many of which associated the gods with his own rule.²⁷⁴ As ‘the most prominent landmarks in the city’,²⁷⁵ temples were a constant reminder of the importance of the gods in Rome.²⁷⁶ Augustus’ construction of temples in Rome, and their association with his own rule, sacralized the city. According to Stambaugh, this ‘set a standard of urban beauty consonant with its political importance, proclaiming the greatness and beneficence of the princeps, the “first man” of the state.’²⁷⁷

Augustus also reorganised the streets of Rome between 12 and 7 BCE. He created 265 new districts and at each of their crossroads added shrines to his Genius, accompanying shrines to the *Lares* of the area.²⁷⁸ Price notes, ‘The Augustan reorganization of the ward cults placed the emperor within the life of the city of Rome.’²⁷⁹ Along with these shrines, a number of other material symbols reminded residents of the Rome of the seemingly omniscient presence of the Emperor, such as statues and coins.²⁸⁰

In the eastern regions of the empire, residents responded to imperial ideology by worshipping the emperor as a god, in the so-called imperial cult. Although not officially approved, the imperial cult was an important response to the place of the emperor within the Roman state.²⁸¹ The emperors allowed eastern provinces to engage in such practices in continuity with their cultures, but typically prohibited

²⁷³ For a complimentary account of Augustus’ renovations of temples in Rome, see Suet. *Aug.* XXIX-XXX

²⁷⁴ Beard, *Religions of Rome I*, 196-201.

²⁷⁵ Stambaugh, *Ancient Roman City*, 215.

²⁷⁶ Temples included the *Templum*, where the auspices were taken and sacrifices offered on an altar, and the *aedes*, which was the (optional) surrounding building where cultic images could be placed and other gifts left to the gods; Stambaugh, *Ancient Roman City*, 214-215,

²⁷⁷ Stambaugh, *Ancient Roman City*, 49.

²⁷⁸ Jack Finegan, *Myth and Mystery: An Introduction to the Pagan Religions of the Biblical World* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1989), 213.

²⁷⁹ Price, “Place of Religion,” 824.

²⁸⁰ Hopkins notes that these, ‘helped maintain a living presence of the emperors in public places and in the consciousness of subjects,’ Hopkins, “Divine Emperors,” 223.

²⁸¹ See Price, *Rituals and Power*, for a good discussion.

Romans from treating them as divine.²⁸² Nevertheless, eastern residents constructed temples to the divine emperors, as well as offering them sacrifices.

The effects of imperial ideology in Rome were more subtle, but no less significant. Imperial ideology encouraged the people of Rome to recognise the centrality and significance of the Roman emperors. Practices developed which stopped short of the divinisation of the emperors but which honoured the emperor as close to the gods.

Augustus' reign was, again, significant for later developments. Augustus associated events of his reign with particular days, introducing a number of festivals into the Roman calendar.²⁸³ Significantly, the climax of these events was a sacrifice. Religion was closely connected to the power of the rulers in these festivals, underlying their connection with the gods.

Roman residents also paid respect to the 'genius' and to the 'numen' of Augustus, which was also indicative of his close relationship to the gods.²⁸⁴ Augustus encouraged libations to his 'genius' to be taken at banquets in Rome, while shrines connected to his Genius were placed at the major crossroads of Rome. Oaths were also taken by the 'genius' of the emperor (Hor. *Ep.* 11.15; Dio Lvii 8.3).²⁸⁵ Augustus' 'numen', was also honoured in hymns and sacrifices.²⁸⁶ A 'numen-cult' developed which, 'signalled that the emperor himself, in person, was not actually receiving cult due to the gods – and, at the same time, signalled that of course there was very little that separated Augustus from the gods.'²⁸⁷

The development of imperial ideology in the reign of Augustus related to the transition between the republican and imperial periods, and reassured the imperial world that Augustus' political position was also a religious one. Both in the west and in the east, the emperor was placed above ordinary mortals and came close to the gods, even if the east went further in identifying the living emperor with a god.²⁸⁸

²⁸² Cuss, *Imperial Cult*, 30-35; Hopkins, "Divine Emperors", 202-205.

²⁸³ Scullard, *Festivals and Ceremonies*, 114-118.

²⁸⁴ For a detailed discussion of Augustus' 'genius', his 'numen' and their relationship, see Fishwick, *Imperial Cult in the Latin West*, 375-387.

²⁸⁵ Liebeschuetz, *Continuity and Change*, 68-76.

²⁸⁶ Beard, *Religions of Rome I*, 206-210.

²⁸⁷ Beard, *Religions of Rome I*, 207.

²⁸⁸ For the contrast between west and east, see Fishwick, *Imperial Cult in the Latin West*, 92-93.

Roman imperial ideology encouraged a kind of realised eschatology, which saw in the imperial line permanence and security. This way of putting it deliberately contrasts imperial ideology with apocalyptic eschatology, which, as we saw above, emphasised the disjunctive, future elements of eschatology. Imperial ideology encouraged the residents of Rome to see the emperor as beneficent, and as responsible for bringing peace and order to the known world. It emphasised that the emperor was related to the gods (both literally and metaphorically), who empowered him and enabled him to rule on their behalf.

The Julio-Claudians

The Julio-Claudian emperors following Augustus inherited the imperial ideology he developed. The emperors maintained, at the very least, an ideology that associated them with the gods. They each, however, exploited the association with the divine in different ways, some expressing scepticism towards the claims of their semi-divinity, and others overtly claiming a divine status, and so offending Roman sensibilities. To preserve the appearance of continuity with former traditions, emperors had to walk a fine line between affirming their divine traits and recognising their subjection to the gods above. When emperors struck the right balance, they were seen as suitable for post-mortem divinisation.

Tiberius, who reigned from 14 – 37 CE, was initially a moderate ruler who enjoyed a generally successful reign over the Mediterranean. Following the death of his son in 26 CE, however, he travelled to Capri and remained there as a distant ruler for the rest of his life.²⁸⁹ In terms of imperial ideology, Tiberius closely followed the example of Augustus. He refused divine honours in Rome, but allowed eastern provinces to follow their own traditions (Tac, *Ann.* IV, 55-56).²⁹⁰ Tiberius maintained a connection with imperial ideology, even if he refused direct divine honours. Through coins and architecture, Tiberius particularly emphasised his virtues of *Clementia* and *Moderatio*.²⁹¹

Gaius gained imperial rule at a young age and ruled from 37 – 41 CE. Shortly into his reign, Gaius began to claim full divine honours (Dio 28.1-2; Suet, *Gaius* 22.3). He

²⁸⁹ Goodman, *Roman World*, 47-52.

²⁹⁰ Charlesworth, "Observations," 28-29; Cuss, *Imperial Cult*, 30-33.

²⁹¹ Fishwick, *Imperial Cult in the Latin West*, 455-459.

demanding temples to be constructed in his honour, as well as appropriating other divine honours.²⁹² Gaius even went so far as proclaiming his divinity. He is perhaps best known in early Christian history for his attempt to erect his image in the Jerusalem Temple, a response to the refusal by Jews to honour him as divine. He was eventually assassinated. Jones describes Gaius as, 'a megalomaniac with an inferiority complex who believed in his own divinity and demanded worship in his lifetime.'²⁹³

Claudius reigned from 41 – 54 CE. Like Tiberius, Claudius strove to emulate the example of Augustus in his appropriation of divine honours (Dio LX, 5, 4). Evidence from the East suggests he was called 'Lord' and 'Saviour of the World'.²⁹⁴ Following his death, Claudius was divinised with the support of Nero, possibly to veil his own role in Claudius' death.

The last Julio-Claudian emperor was Nero, who reigned from 54 – 68 CE.²⁹⁵ Paul, of course, wrote Romans near the beginning of Nero's reign. Nero is remembered in the sources for his general depravity and immorality, as well as his responsibility for ending the Julio-Claudian line. Although some recent scholars have attempted to soften the harsh historical record on Nero,²⁹⁶ it seems likely that Nero offended Roman sensibilities and genuinely attempted to link himself to the divine. Nero is also known for his matricide, theatrical antics, sexual immorality, and murder of opponents.

Scholars have noted that Nero's worst offences occurred following the murder of Agrippina in 59 CE.²⁹⁷ In the first five years of his reign, the so-called *quinquennium*, Nero seems to have been a reasonable ruler. Nevertheless, ancient authors agreed

²⁹² Donald L. Jones, "Christianity and the Roman Imperial Cult," *ANRW* II. 23. 2 (1984), 1026-1027.

²⁹³ Jones, "Christianity and the Roman Imperial Cult," 1026.

²⁹⁴ Jones, "Christianity and the Roman Imperial Cult," 1027-1028.

²⁹⁵ For a discussion of Nero's reign, see Miriam T. Griffin, *Nero: The End of a Dynasty* (London: B. T. Batsford Ltd, 1984).

²⁹⁶ In particular, see the articles found in *Reflections of Nero: Culture, History, and Representation*, ed. Jás Elsner and James Masters (London: Duckworth, 1994), including "Introduction," Jás Elsner and James Masters, 1-8; "Nero in Tacitus and Nero in Tacitism: The historian's craft," Joan-Pau Rubiés, 29-47; and "The *inventio* of Nero: Suetonius," Tamsyan Barton, 48-63.

²⁹⁷ For a discussion of the *quinquennium*, and a critique of its suitability for interpreting Nero's reign, see Griffin, *Nero*, 84-87.

that the roots of Nero's later violence are found in his earlier years. Goodman also notes of the *quinquennium*,

the picture may well be a myth conjured up by those who wanted to excuse their co-operation with Nero in his early years, when all agreed after Nero's death than in the end he had become monstrous.²⁹⁸

Although scholars debate whether Nero ever claimed *direct* divine honours for himself, he remained committed to a broad imperial ideology throughout his reign. Following Nero's ascension, Seneca lauded Nero as the saviour of the world, praising him as returning the world to the golden age.²⁹⁹ Ovid's fourth eclogue also praises Nero's relationship to the gods.³⁰⁰

Nero's own actions also endorsed and developed imperial ideology. In 55 CE, he set up a statue of himself in the temple of Mars Ultor.³⁰¹ His association with Mars was an overt claim of relationship with the gods. As Jones puts it, 'Not since Caesar had an emperor been so directly associated with a god in Rome.'³⁰² In 59 CE, Nero also set up the Augustinia, a group of 5000 soldiers who would praise him as he entered the theatre (Dio, LXII, 20, 3-5; Tac, Ann, 26.4.4; Suet, Nero, 20, 6).³⁰³ In 62 CE, Nero also set up an arch on the Capital, associating himself with Victoria and Pax, and in 66 CE, he closed the temple of Ianus (Suet, 13, 2), signifying his establishment of peace throughout the empire.³⁰⁴ Nero's divine pretensions are also described by Suetonius, who describes Nero's return to the city from one of his many competitions dressed as a god.³⁰⁵

In his letter to the Romans, Paul wrote to a community which encountered Roman imperial ideology in its visual and rhetorical landscape. Although the imperial cult was more prevalent in the east, imperial ideology was proclaimed in the daily life of all Roman residents. Christians in Rome were surrounded by images of emperor,

²⁹⁸ Goodman, *Roman World*, 56.

²⁹⁹ In 65 CE, however, Nero caused Seneca to commit suicide; E. Stauffer, *Christ and the Caesars: Historical Sketches* (London: SCM Press, 1955), 138-141.

³⁰⁰ Fears, *Princeps*, 134.

³⁰¹ Jones, "Christianity and the Roman Imperial Cult", 1029-1032.

³⁰² Jones, "Christianity and the Roman Imperial Cult", 1029.

³⁰³ Cuss, *Imperial Cult*, 74-83.

³⁰⁴ Weinstock, "Pax and the 'Ara Pacis'," 44-52.

³⁰⁵ Suet, *Ner.*, XXV.

power, and divinity. Imperial ideology, then, is a significant context for understanding Paul's letter to the Romans.

Conflict in Rome in the Ancient World

Throughout the Republic and Imperial periods of Roman rule, conflict regularly broke out between the rulers of Rome and its residents. Conflict emerged within different social classes and for a variety of reasons. Social unrest among the populace was a clear catalyst for conflict, but ideological hostility to Roman rulers also played an important role. Conflict often led Roman rulers to expel groups of residents from the imperial capital, preserving the peace within it. In more extreme cases, Romans could bring charges to bear against those causing conflict.

Some resistance to Rome emerged from within the aristocracy.³⁰⁶ Their sophisticated philosophical views, and attachment to old republican values, produced a number of rebel thinkers who attacked Roman ideals through their views. Though they did not threaten Rome with the sword, they encouraged those who did and so were subject to censorship, exile, and even death.

The groups more relevant for our purposes are the foreign religious groups in Rome, who represented the majority of the residents. Although less overt at voicing their distrust of the Roman rulers, they also provoked conflict with the emperors. The history of Roman hostility to residents of Rome reveals a broader context for considering reasons for conflict between the early Christians and the Romans. Although the conflict between apocalyptic eschatology and imperial ideology traced within this thesis was ideological, it was also a potential catalyst for Roman repression of Christians.

Religious Assimilation and Religious Conflict

Roman religion was enormously adaptive at assimilating foreign religious ideas and movements. From a very early stage, Romans met and interacted with foreign

³⁰⁶ See Ramsay MacMullen, *Enemies of the Roman Order: Treason, Unrest, and Alienation in the Empire* (Cambridge, Massachusetts / London: Harvard University Press / Oxford University Press, 1967); J. P. V. D. Balsdon, *Romans and Aliens* (London: Duckworth, 1979), 161-192. For elite 'resistance' at the time of Nero, see Rudich Vasily, *Political Dissidence under Nero: The price of dissimulation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993).

religions, and frequently incorporated their ideas into their own beliefs.³⁰⁷ The best example of this was the Roman religious acquisition of Greek deities and ideas. Romans adapted Greek mythology, as well as Greek sacrificial practices.³⁰⁸ Romans also accepted other eastern gods, often at times of national crisis when it was hoped that the assistance of a foreign deity could assist the Roman rulers. During these periods of crisis, the Roman rulers would consult the Sibylline books, which often advised the incorporation of foreign cults or gods as a 'solution'. This occurred for the first time during the third Carthaginian War, when Rome was threatened by the assaults of Hannibal. The Sibylline books advised that the Great Mother be brought from Phrygia and have a temple constructed for her in Rome, which occurred in 204 BCE.³⁰⁹ Following this action, Rome successfully resisted the advances of Hannibal.

Alongside the assimilation of foreign religious ideas, the Romans were also tolerant of the right of foreigners to practise their own religion. The Romans were not 'exclusive' in their belief or 'evangelistic' in their efforts to propagate Roman beliefs and rituals among foreigners. As far as most Romans were concerned, each nation had their own gods and was perfectly entitled to worship them. This acknowledgement was simply a corollary of polytheism. If many gods existed, then different nations had different gods.³¹⁰ The existence of religious voluntary associations in the late Republic and early Empire is persuasive evidence for the way in which Romans allowed natives to practice their own religious traditions.

The assimilation of foreign religious ideas and acceptance of foreign religions by Romans is, however, only one side of the story. The process of incorporating foreign deities into Rome became more regulated with time. Boundaries were increasingly important, so that only those deities and ideas which were suited to the Roman way

³⁰⁷ Radin notes, 'The Roman state had found itself obliged to take cognizance of the foreign religious movements at an early date,' Max Radin, *The Jews Among the Greeks and Romans* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1915), 242.

³⁰⁸ There has, in fact, been a traditional negative attitude to the adoption of Greek myths by Rome. Many scholars have assumed that the adoption of what were originally 'foreign' myths makes the Roman mythology impure in some way. One only needs to name such an assumption to highlight its falsehood.

³⁰⁹ Finegan, *Myth and Mystery*, 193-196

³¹⁰ The Romans did, however, require nations which they had conquered to acknowledge Roman gods, because 'The gods of other nations had demonstrated their inferiority to the Roman gods by failing to protect their nations against the power of Rome's legions,' Robert M. Grant, *The Sword and the Cross* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1955), 12.

of life were accepted into Rome. As the Roman administration became more aware of Rome's separate religious identity, the preservation of 'Romanness' became important.³¹¹ The Roman government believed that foreign gods and cults could hinder Rome and harm the sanctity of its institutions. Adopting foreign gods and cults was still possible, but needed to be 'vetoed' by one of the priestly colleges.

Roman fear of foreign religious movements is illustrated by Rome's response to the second century BCE Bacchanalia movement. Although occurring long before Paul's time, Roman response to the Bacchanalia set a precedent for the Roman state which continued into the imperial period. As Grant notes, 'The suppression of the Bacchanalia provided the classical example for later dealings with foreign religions not accepted by the state.'³¹² The case illustrates the xenophobia towards foreignness characteristic of the Roman elite, and shows how foreign religious movements could appear as politically subversive to the ancient Romans.

An account of the suppression of the Bacchanalia movement is found in Livy (19.8-19). The Bacchanalia cult, centred on the god Bacchus (Greek, Dionysus), was originally restricted to females and only accepted new initiates three days a year. Livy records that an informant Hispala told the Roman authorities of recent changes in the cult. Hispala claimed that one of the female priests had allowed the admission of men into the group, had introduced nocturnal rites, and had provided opportunities for initiation every month. It was at this point that the trouble seems to have started. Those within the cult became involved in sexual promiscuity. As well as this, those who refused to take the oath of the initiate were killed. Murder, fraud, and deceit took place. The cult grew rapidly and some from noble families also became involved. When this came to the attention of the Senate, a decree was issued forbidding involvement within the sect, unless permission was gained from the Senate and the sect members agreed to keep a number of rules. The holy places of the cult were destroyed and 7000 of those involved were arrested and either executed or imprisoned, more of the former than the latter according to Livy.

It is difficult to know exactly how accurate Livy is in his account of this incident. He is preserving a story of what actually happened, as we also have a copy of the senatorial decree, but the extent to which his interpretative comments are true to the

³¹¹ Beard, *Religions of Rome I*, 214-228.

³¹² Grant, *Sword and the Cross*, 20.

original event is an open question. Nevertheless, the actual or perceived conspiracy of this foreign cult set a precedent for allowing later Romans to suspect other foreign cults of similar illegal and immoral activity. Particularly interesting in Livy's account is the record of the language used by the Senators for the foreign cult. In 19.15, the consul contrasts the Roman gods, to whom he has offered a prayer before the speech, with the foreign deities;

these are the gods whom our forefathers had appointed to be worshipped, to be venerated, to receive our prayers, not those gods who would drive our enthralled minds with vile and alien rites, as by the scourges of the Furies, to every crime and every lust. (19.15.2-4).

In 19.16, the same consul makes an interesting reference to how previously foreign deities were dealt with in Rome,

How often, in the times of our fathers and our grandfathers, has the task been assigned to the magistrates of forbidding the introduction of foreign cults, of excluding dabblers in sacrifices and fortune-tellers from the Forum, the Circus, and the City, of searching out and burning books of prophecies, and of annulling every system of sacrifice except that performed in the Roman way. (19.16.8-9).

This language in Livy expresses typical Roman prejudice to the foreign. Even it does not preserve the true voice of the Consul at the time of the Bacchanalia, it reflects the Augustan age in which Livy writes, which is the immediately more relevant one to the time of Paul. The Bacchanali cult was allowed to continue under strict conditions³¹³, but the restrictions imposed effectively prevented the cult's further growth and we do not hear of it again until the first century.

Later responses to foreign religions by Rome followed the example of the Bacchanalia case, but often issued in the less extreme response of expulsion. By expelling foreign religious movements, Romans removed them from the sacred boundaries of Rome, and ensured the purity of Roman life and belief.

The cult of Isis, for example, experienced periodic suppression within Rome. Centred on the goddess Isis, the cult was brought to Rome in the second century BCE.³¹⁴ It was a type of mystery religion, and also had its own priesthood and temples. Throughout the 50s BCE and in 48 BCE, the shrines of the cult were

³¹³ For those who wanted to belong to it, approval from the Senate was required and only restricted numbers of members were allowed.

³¹⁴ Plutarch describe the cult in his 'On Isis and Osiris'. Finegan, *Myth and Mystery*, 196-197

destroyed in Rome (Cic. *Att.*, 2.17.2; Dio 40.47.3-4; 42.26.1-2).³¹⁵ Octavian later excluded the Isis cult from within the sacred boundary of the Pomerium (in 28 BCE). In the reign of Tiberius, Isis temples were again destroyed, and Tiberius deported Isis worshippers from Rome, along with Jews (Suet, *Tib.* 36; Tac., *Ann.* ii. 85). The cult of Isis was finally recognised under Gaius, who rebuilt a temple for Isis. Later emperors also honoured the cult.³¹⁶

In the first century BCE and the first century CE, Roman also attempted to control the existence of voluntary associations, which, as noted earlier, frequently included religious element within them. The voluntary associations had become increasingly used as centres of political opposition.³¹⁷ Their potential political danger had become obvious in the late Republic during the civil war. At this time, '[t]he frequent meetings of the guilds had been a cloak for their seditious plans to take over the city.'³¹⁸ This led to senatorial ban on the voluntary associations in 64 BCE. The subsequent removal of the ban by Clodius, and his explicit use of members of voluntary associations as a kind of private army, convinced later authorities to reintroduce restrictions and controls upon voluntary associations. Augustus' policy set the tone for following emperors, allowing clubs to exist provided they gained permission from the senate.³¹⁹ Although many associations existed without this permission, in times of conflict emperors targeted illegal societies and restricted legal ones.³²⁰ As Cotter notes,

from the time of the late republic, the prohibition against and dissolution of voluntary societies was an unquestioned right and frequently employed policy of the Romans.³²¹

We can also note that Romans restricted the 'illegitimate' religious beliefs of astrologers and magicians. Astrologers were particularly viewed as dangerous when the calculations centred on men of power and implied their removal from office or

³¹⁵ Beard, *Religions of Rome I*, 160-161; Walters, *Ethnic Issues*, 43.

³¹⁶ Finegan, *Myth and Mystery*, 196-197

³¹⁷ Walters, *Ethnic Issues*, 16.

³¹⁸ Cotter, "Collegia," 76.

³¹⁹ Cotter, "Collegia," 78; Walters, *Ethnic Issues*, 16.

³²⁰ Claudius, for instance, banned taverns and restricted the sale of meat and water on the street in order to restrict the possibility of illegal meetings; Cotter, "Collegia," 80-81.

³²¹ Cotter, "Collegia," 88.

death. They were expelled from Rome numerous times (Suet, Aug. 35; Dio xlix, 43.5).³²² Likewise, 'magic' posed a threat because it was an illicit form of religion,³²³ which could be used against the imperial house.

Jews and Romans

Rome's relationship with the Jewish community in Rome is again marked by acceptance and conflict. The acceptance of Jews is reflected in the *senatus consulta* protecting Jewish religious rites, and the general respect paid to Jewish religious practices. Roman conflict with the Jews in Rome is marked by the expulsion of the Jews from the city three times in the late Republic and early Imperial period.

Josephus records a number of *senatus consulta* which granted significant concessions to Jewish religious belief under Caesar and Augustus.³²⁴ These *senatus consulta* acted as precedents for later Roman decrees concerning the Jews and safeguarded their religious and civil rights. They preserved the right to meet together, even while other voluntary associations were forced to disassemble, and allowed Jews to abstain from military involvement.³²⁵ As long as the early Christians remained among the Jews, they would have also lived under their legal protection. As soon as Christianity began to be Gentile-orientated, however, their status became less certain. The Jewish community also, however, experienced conflict with Roman authorities, marked by their occasional expulsions from the city of Rome.

Valerius Maximus, the Roman historian and Orator, refers to the first Roman expulsion of Jews in 139 BCE.³²⁶ In the records we have, Valerius Maximus explains that Jews were expelled from Rome because they were proselytising. It is not clear, however, whether it was the Jews themselves who proselytised or gentile enthusiasts for Judaism who spread the message. If temples were raised in the city for the Jewish

³²² Liebeschuetz, *Continuity and Change*, 123-125; Beard, *Religions of Rome I*, 230ff.

³²³ Beard, *Religions of Rome I*, 149-156

³²⁴ E.g., Jos, *Ant.* 14.186-267;

³²⁵ L. V. Rutgers, "Roman Policy towards the Jews: Expulsions from the City of Rome during the First Century C.E." in *The Hidden Heritage of Diaspora Judaism*, Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology, ed. Tj. Baarda, A. van der kooij and A. S. van der Woude, 171-197 (Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 1998), 172-174.

³²⁶ The two sources are quoted, with commentary, in Feldman, *Jewish Life and Thought*, 313-314. One is the epitome of Julius Paris, from the fourth century CE, and the other is the epitome of Januarius Nepotianus, from the fourth or fifth century CE.

God, then this would suggest the latter explanation. The expulsion of astrologers along with Jews suggests that, 'this action is directed against all religious customs originating in the Orient and thus one cannot speak of any specific anti-Semitism.'³²⁷ The event does show that the Jews at this time, along with the astrologers, were present in Rome and that Rome frowned upon conversions into Judaism.³²⁸

The first expulsion of Jews from Rome by an emperor occurred in 19 CE under Tiberius, an event recorded in a number of sources.³²⁹ Some scholars connect this event with the success of Jewish proselytism, following Dio Cassius' explanation,³³⁰ while others suggest that Sejanus probably played a role, following Philo's explanation that any anti-Semitic attitude on Tiberius' part was due to Sejanus.³³¹ Slingerland connects this expulsion with the Roman attempt to wipe out Jewish practices within the city,³³² but this is unlikely. As Smallwood points out, 'the *senatus consultum* by which Tacitus says the conscription and expulsion orders were issued implies investigation and due deliberation not an arbitrary and spiteful attack.' Rutger is sceptical of Dio's explanation that proselytism was a cause, as his late date and the improbability of mass-conversions in the first century make this unlikely. Rather, an expulsion may have occurred in order to maintain order in a time of political unrest (perhaps a lack in the corn-supply), a well-known imperial strategy.³³³ As Rutger acknowledges, however, it is hard to account for why Jews and Isis worshippers were targeted. For lack of a better explanation, the success of Judaism in attracting converts is probably an adequate explanation.³³⁴ Nevertheless,

³²⁷ Wiefel, "Jewish Community," 67-68.

³²⁸ L. H. Feldman, *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World. Attitudes and Interactions from Alexander to Justinian* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 93; According to Leon, the text indicates that the Jews were visitors to Rome, rather than a settled group. In that case, it does not tell us about the existence of an established community, but only about early restrictions of Jewish rites in Rome; Harry J. Leon, *The Jews of Ancient Rome*, (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1960), 3-4.

³²⁹ Jos, *JA*, 18.81-4; Tac. *Ann.* 2.85; Suet. *Tib.* 36; Dio. 57.18.5a.

³³⁰ Feldman, *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World*, 94; Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, xlvi; Jeffers, *Conflict at Rome*, 10; Smallwood, *Jews*, 202-210; Walters, *Ethnic Issues*, 46-48.

³³¹ Philo, *Leg.*, 159-61. Leon, *Jews of Ancient Rome*, 17-20.

³³² H. Dixon Slingerland, *Claudian Policymaking and the Early Imperial Repression of Judaism at Rome*, (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1997), 50-62.

³³³ Rutgers, "Roman Policy," 176-181.

³³⁴ Part of Rutgers' discomfort with this explanation relates to his scepticism that Jews were successful in gaining many converts in this period (177-79). Although Rutgers is probably right in this, conversions among the upper classes, perhaps reflected in Josephus' confused account of this event,

not all Jews could have been expelled and Philo indicates that Jews soon regained their rights (Philo *Leg.* 159-61).

A further expulsion took place in the reign of Claudius, around 49 CE. The treatment of Jews by Claudius is mentioned in four sources. As well as the note in Suetonius, which refers to the 'instigation of Chrestus', the event is referred to in Acts (18:2), Cassius Dio (60, 6, 6), and Orosius (*Hist.* 6, 6, 15f.). The event is particularly significant because the expulsion may have been due to public disagreements among the Jews over Christ. For this reason, the expulsion will be discussed in the following section. Here, it is significant to note that Jews were expelled because of public unrest they were causing at the time. The Jewish communities expelled eventually returned to Rome under Nero.

The relationship of the rulers of Rome to Jews, then, included positive steps for their protection, and negative actions against them. It is difficult to know whether any real agenda drove Roman policy towards the Jews. Slingerland argues that anti-Semitism consistently drove imperial policy, with its primary aim as driving out Jewish religious belief. Focusing on the reign of Claudius, Slingerland concludes that 'absolute power, outrageously prejudicial attitudes, self-righteous certitude, and whim lie behind the policymaking not only of Claudius but of his imperial predecessors as well.'³³⁵ Rutgers, on the other hand, argues that Roman policy was more ad-hoc. According to Rutgers, Rome protected Jewish religious practices but expelled Jews from Rome in time of potential or actual trouble among the masses; 'Insofar as sources indicate at all why Roman authorities decided to act, they all suggest that the main motive was the wish to suppress unrest.'³³⁶ Romans never

may well have had wider repercussions, even if only few conversions occurred. Thus, one need not believe that 'mass conversions' occurred to accept Dio's basic explanation for this event (even if Dio exaggerates in suggesting that many were converted), neither does the well-founded scepticism of a 'Jewish mission' in this period preclude this hypothesis.

³³⁵ Slingerland, *Claudian Policymaking*, 245. Although it cannot be discussed fully here, Slingerland's argument is unconvincing because it requires him to ignore or downplay the many positive Jewish reports of Roman rule, including in Josephus and Philo, and to uncritically accept the prejudices of Tacitus and other Roman historians. His reliance on sources is blatantly one-sided. His consistent dismissal of Jewish portrayals of Jewish-Roman relations on the basis of 'apologetic motives' fails to recognise the 'apologetic motives' of the Roman authors on whom he relies so heavily. In this case, 'apologetic motives' cover a multitude of fictions. It seems logically tortuous to claim that Jews consistently invented material to convince the multitude that the Roman state was, in fact, benevolent if it was manifestly not so.

³³⁶ Rutgers, "Policy," 183.

implemented policies on the basis of a supposed tolerance or intolerance towards the Jews, but decisions were made on pragmatic grounds.³³⁷ The memory of the bacchanalia, and fear of the corruption caused to Rome by foreigners, also played a role. Walters notes that this suspicion of eastern religions influenced decisions on Jewish affairs made by the different emperors;

The vicissitudes of Rome's Jewish population under the Julio-Claudians were related to the level of distress felt by emperors over the expansion of Oriental religions in the capital: The greater the fear, the more likely the conflict.³³⁸

There were a variety of reasons for Roman conflict with Jews in Rome. Repression of the Jews in Rome could occur because of personal prejudice towards the Jews, their damaging effect on the community (if they were drawing converts), or for the public unrest they caused. The Roman protection of the Jewish community, however, also needs to be kept in mind. It shows that the antiquity and community of the Jews granted them a degree of respect, and led to legal protection of their interests. As long as Christians remained within Judaism, they would be granted that same legal protection.

Christians and Romans

The history of Roman actions towards foreign religious groups shows that Rome could quickly condemn and exile groups deemed to be dangerous. While participation in the Jewish community protected the Christians from the negative aspects of Roman policy on foreign religions, the increasing separation of gentile Christians from Jews, reflected in Romans 16, meant that they lost this protection and became politically vulnerable to governmental repression. Gentile Christians would be considered as members of a new religious sect, rather than as part of the Jewish community. At the time Paul wrote, the connections between Jews and Christians were just beginning to break down. The identification of the Christians as a separate group allowed Nero to single Christians out as scapegoats for the fire of Rome in 64 CE.

³³⁷ 'Rome was interested in keeping the masses under control and in checking initiatives of too political a nature,' Rutgers, "Roman Policy," 187.

³³⁸ Thus, Tiberius and Claudius were particularly hostile to religions from the east, while Gaius and Nero were attracted to forms of eastern religions, and so less hostile; Walters, *Ethnic Issues*, 53.

The separation of gentile Christians from Jews in Rome was partly fostered by the Claudius edict, in which Jews were expelled from Rome. The expulsion of Jews by Claudius ‘who caused disorder/rioted at the instigation of Chrestus [impulsore Chresto]’ (Suet. *Claud* 24.2) is believed by many scholars to be the earliest pagan reference to Christianity in Rome. Suetonius, however, is the only source to mention ‘Chrestus,’ and each of the sources lends a different colouring to the event, making it difficult to reconstruct exactly what happened.

According to Suetonius’ record of the event (*Claud* 24.4), Claudius expelled the Jews for causing disorder at the ‘instigation of Chrestus’. Many scholars believe that ‘Chrestus’ here is a misspelling of Christ and that Suetonius misinterprets messianic preaching in Rome for the presence of Christ himself. If the expulsion was a response to Jewish disputes over Christ, and Christian Jews as well as non-Christians were expelled from the city, gentile Christians would be left behind and would gain the positions of power and influence within the congregation. When Jews returned to the city, tensions with the gentile Christians probably arose, leading to the gentile dismissal of Jewish Christians which Paul counters in Romans.³³⁹ As well as explaining the strength of gentile Christians within the church at Rome, if ‘Chrestus’ refers to messianic preaching, the expulsion indicates the first state action taken against Christians in Rome.

The most blatant ‘contradiction’ between the sources is found between Cassius Dio, who claims that Claudius only restricted certain rights of the Jews (he explicitly rules out an expulsion), and the rest of the sources, which all mention an expulsion. Within the framework of Cassius Dio’s narrative, the event can be dated about 41 CE, whereas the other sources indicate an expulsion in the late 40s. Because Cassius Dio rules out the expulsion, his record should not be fused with the other accounts which explicitly mention an expulsion. This crucial difference, coupled with the early date offered by Cassius, convinces many that two different events occurred.³⁴⁰ The first

³³⁹ The expulsion, however, is not necessary for reading Romans in the way we have argued. The growth of gentiles within the Christian congregations also matched similar trends throughout the Mediterranean.

³⁴⁰ Helga Botermann, *Das Judenedict des Kaisers Claudius*, Hermes: Zeitschrift für klassische Philologie, ed. Jürgen Blänsdorf, Jochen Blecken, and Wolfgang Kullmann, (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1996), 144; H Slingerland, *Claudian Policymaking*, 98-105; Smallwood, *Jews Under Roman Rule*, 215-216; John M. G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: From Alexander to Trajan (323BC-117CE)* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 305-306.

edict, recording restrictions on Jews meeting together, eventually led to the expulsion of 49 CE.³⁴¹ Some scholars argue that this may have been a first measure to prevent the disorder caused by arguments over Christ, which would set the origins of Christianity in Rome before 41 CE. When this first measure did not have the desired effect, Claudius later moved to expel those involved in 49.³⁴² While this is an attractive proposal, there is simply not enough information to confirm or deny the hypothesis.³⁴³

The date 49 CE is cited in Orosius work. While there is uncertainty over where exactly Orosius obtained his date,³⁴⁴ 49 CE fits well with the accounts of Acts and Suetonius, which seem to place the expulsion in the late 40s. Jews were expelled at this time because of disorder caused in Rome. Although in Acts 18:1-3, the author claims that ‘all’ Jews were expelled, this is [probably] due to Lukan exaggeration.³⁴⁵ Suetonius’ passage can be translated to include all Jews or those specifically involved in the disturbances. The latter is more likely, as a general expulsion would be illegal and impractical - a number of Jews were Roman citizens and the sheer number of Jews in Rome would have prevented such an attempt.³⁴⁶

A number of scholars have argued that ‘Chrestus’ in Suetonius’ reference misspells ‘Christus’ and is indicative of Christian preaching, a view known as the *interpretatio christiana*. Christus, however, could also refer to a messianic figure other than Jesus, or to messianic speculation in general.³⁴⁷ Slingerland argues that Chrestus is not a

³⁴¹ Such an action appears to contradict an essential aspect of Judaism, i.e., the importance of meeting together. Slingerland concurs and argues that this is exactly what the emperor was trying to do; H. Slingerland, *Claudian Policymaking*, 131-134. Botermann, however, suggests that meetings are restricted because the emperor assumes that they are becoming centres of unrest. Only by restricting them can the ‘traditional way of life’ of the Jews be preserved (*Judenedict*, 131-32).

³⁴² Botermann, *Judenedict*, 131-132.

³⁴³ Rutgers has pointed to evidence that expulsions regularly occurred in times of civil unrest and could relate to a whole variety of reasons (e.g., the lack of corn caused by famine in 41).

³⁴⁴ Orosius himself claims to have found the date in Josephus, but it is not found in the works of his we have. Slingerland claims that Orosius has invented the date 49 because, within his narrative, a famine devastates the land the following year and so Orosius apologetically connects the expulsion to the year 49 to show that punishment of Christians backfired to punish Rome. Thus, Slingerland thinks that the date is as good as any, but ‘stands or falls on its own merits.’ *Claudian Policymaking*, 121-129.

³⁴⁵ Cf., Luke’s use of *Pantes* throughout his Gospel; Botermann, *Judenedict*, 47-49; Lampe, *Christen*, 6-7; Lane, “Social Perspectives,” 204.

³⁴⁶ Botermann, *Judenedict*, 50-54.

³⁴⁷ Botermann discusses various ‘Christus’ interpretations, *Judenedict*, 57-62.

mistranslation at all, but that a figure by this name ‘instigated’ the expulsion by persuading the emperor to expel the Jews, rather than by inciting the Jews personally.³⁴⁸ In Slingerland’s view, ‘this man probably played a minor role in the periodic subjugation of Roman Jewish religiosity under the early empire.’³⁴⁹ Suetonius assumes that his readers are familiar with this Chrestus and contemporary ignorance of his identity is no warrant for connecting the event to Christ.³⁵⁰ Slingerland’s contention that ‘all the evidence intended to establish the *interpretatio christiana* of *Claudius* 25.4 proves itself to be irrelevant, fallacious, or supportive of the opposite conclusion’,³⁵¹ is too strong, but his arguments place the burden of proof firmly on those who argue for the interpretation.

Botermann’s work takes up the challenge of arguing for the *interpretatio christiana* by examining separately the four sources. Against Slingerland, Botermann argues that ‘impulsore Chresto’ implies ‘Chrestus’ instigated the unrest, rather than the emperor’s actions. According to Botermann, Suetonius’ record of the event, which implies that Chrestus was present, rests on an error in the official ‘police’ report, which, perhaps understandably, mistook the Christian claim that Jesus is alive as a claim that he was alive and active in Rome. It is unlikely that the officials would have been familiar with the function and meaning of Christian resurrection language at this stage.³⁵² Slingerland’s dismissal of the Acts account as significant, arguing that there is no indication in the narrative that Prisca and Aquila were Christians before they met Paul,³⁵³ is countered by Botermann, who offers evidence that their Christian status is implied in the narrative of Acts.³⁵⁴

³⁴⁸ Slingerland, *Claudian Policymaking*, 163-168.

³⁴⁹ Slingerland, *Claudian Policymaking*, 241.

³⁵⁰ Slingerland, *Claudian Policymaking*, 179-201. For a summary of Slingerland’s arguments against the Chrestus=Christianity approach, cf., pp. 203-217.

³⁵¹ Slingerland, *Claudian Policymaking*, 217.

³⁵² Botermann, *Judenedict*, 97-102.

³⁵³ Slingerland, *Claudian Policymaking*, 212-213.

³⁵⁴ The lack of a conversion story introducing Prisca and Aquila suggests that they were Christians before meeting Paul (and so had probably been Christians in Rome) as Acts typically introduces new characters into the narrative by telling of their conversion; Botermann, *Judenedict*, 46-47. Botermann also points out that Paul never mentions Prisca and Aquila among those whom he had baptised in Corinth (1 Cor. 1:14-16) and that Stephanas is the ‘firstfruits’ in Asia (1 Cor. 16:15).

Nanos' argument against the *interpretatio christiana* emphasises the discrepancy between this interpretation and Acts 28:17-22, which records Paul's arrival in Rome and his meeting with Jews there, who inquire of Paul, 'we would like to hear from you what you think, for with regard to this sect we know that everywhere it is spoken against' (Acts 28:2).³⁵⁵ Nanos reasons that if an expulsion of Jews had taken place which was connected with Christian preaching, then the Jews at Rome could not have been so ignorant about Christianity. Further, if there was such a connection, why is not Luke explicit about it in either Acts 18 or ten chapters later? In regard to Nanos' first point, we must be wary of accepting at face value Luke's account of the speech from the Jews. Ancient historians felt free to construct speeches appropriate for the occasion they narrated. Even the speech as it stands, however, is consistent with the theory of an expulsion of Jews over Christian claims. The expulsion was probably limited to a few synagogues and so not all Jews would have been affected by the edict. Further, the Jews claim ignorance only about Paul's mission and task, but about the Christ movement itself they know that 'everywhere it is spoken against' (Acts 28:22), an assertion which fits well with the experience of some Jews within Rome. There are also good reasons why Luke would not have mentioned this expulsion in explicit connection with believers in Rome. If Jews were expelled because of disputes over Christ, then this could suggest that the early followers of Jesus caused trouble in the empire and were politically volatile, thus working against one of his purposes in Acts, which was to show that the followers of Jesus were not a political threat.³⁵⁶ Nanos also finds it difficult to reconcile the expulsion with the state of the Roman church in which Jews do seem to have played authority roles. In Romans 16, he argues, '80 percent of Christian Jews mentioned are associated with authority roles in Rome within a few years after the edict of Claudius would have expired.'³⁵⁷ This, however, must be balanced against the recognition that the church at Rome was split into house churches so that authority figures in one group would not have had authority over those of another. Paul's purpose in Romans, as we argued in the introduction, was to counter gentile-Christian dismissal of Jewish

³⁵⁵ Nanos, *Mystery of Romans*, 372-287.

³⁵⁶ F. F. Bruce, *Commentary on the Book of the Acts: The English Text with Introduction, Exposition and Notes* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1965), 17-24.

³⁵⁷ Nanos, *Mystery of Romans*, 482.

Christians, and so his positive description of Jewish Christians within Rome is understandable.³⁵⁸

Although the last word has not yet been written on this issue, and arguments centring on this passage will no doubt continue to be produced, Botermann's case that the Suetonius reference is a witness to disputes over Christ within Rome is a convincing one. If one accepts that Prisca and Aquila were Christians in Rome and, further, that not all Jews were expelled from Rome, then this increases the likelihood that the reason for the expulsion was connected to early Christian preaching. Even if the expulsion was not explicitly connected to the presence of Jewish Christians, however, it would have still affected the early Christian congregations. The expulsion of numbers of Jews from Rome meant that the gentile Christians were left to create and continue their own communities and forced to deal with the later return of Jewish Christians. The Claudius edict contributed towards the movement of early Christians in Rome away from the synagogues and into separate house churches.³⁵⁹

The separation of gentile house churches from the Jewish community makes it likely that Roman Christians in the late 50s would be perceived as a new religious movement. The early Christians would then be vulnerable to political hostility from the Roman state. Conflict could take place between the Roman government and the Christian community, as it did in the mid-60s under Nero. The actual and potential conflict of Christians in Rome with the state is a further political context of Paul's letter to the Romans.

Conclusion

The location of the recipients in Rome is significant as part of the broader context of Romans. The recipients of the letter lived among communities who treated the emperor as divine, or as closely connected to the divine. They would pass shrines to his genius and to the Roman gods as they wandered the streets of Rome. Christianity emerged in a world in which religious rhetoric and practices were connected to the political rule of Rome.

³⁵⁸ Nanos' reading of a strong Jewish presence in the congregation as reflected by other passages is highly contestable and relies to a large extent on his unpersuasive reconstruction of the situation within the Roman church.

³⁵⁹ Wiefel points out that, following the edict, 'Christians could only assemble in Rome if they, as a group, had broken ties with the synagogue', "Jewish Community," 94.

The importance of religion within the Empire influenced how Rome dealt with foreign religious cults. While, on the one hand, it incorporated foreign religious practices and gods into its cult, Rome rejected foreign religious practices which it deemed as dangerous or subversive of Roman rule. Rome allowed foreign cultures to practice their own religions, and so allowed Jews freedom throughout the Empire to follow their ancient customs. Even Jews, however, suffered from xenophobic criticism from the Roman elite and were vulnerable to the whims of individual emperors. The way Rome responded to foreign cults and the Jews established precedents for how it might treat Christians.

The increasing separation of Christians from the synagogues in Rome made them liable to suspicion as a new religious movement. Conflict between the Roman rulers and the Christians could take place. One of the ideological areas of tension between Roman rule and Christianity in Rome was the Christian adoption of apocalyptic eschatology. Each chapter in this thesis will show how apocalyptic themes in Romans conflicted with aspects of imperial ideology.

Conclusion

The political contexts of Romans are both literary and historical. Paul framed his gospel in terms of apocalyptic eschatology, a political as well as a religious world view, and addressed a vulnerable Christian community living in Rome, the centre of Roman imperial ideology. These two contexts provide the basis for identifying political themes throughout Romans, themes which provided the occasion for Romans 13:1-7.

The next three chapters discuss Paul's development of political motifs in Romans and their conflict with Roman imperial ideology. Paul follows the narrative of apocalyptic eschatology, which involved judgment (chap. 3), an eschatological redeemer-figure (chap. 4), and eschatological life (chap. 5). Chapter six focuses on Romans 13:1-7, and suggests that the political motifs throughout Romans provide the literary context for his treatment of Roman authorities. They also, however, limit his call for obedience. Although Paul calls for subordination to governing authorities, his depiction of the gospel in apocalyptic terms also involves living by the Spirit in a community distinct from the world.

CHAPTER THREE: APOCALYPTIC JUDGMENT AND THE POLITICS OF PAUL

One of the primary political motifs in apocalyptic eschatology was the judgment of humanity.¹ The apocalyptists viewed the present as corrupt and sinful and proclaimed God's imminent judgment upon it. This vision of judgment came to include all of humanity in its scope. Foreign rulers and the structures of this world were characterised as part of the sinful order which was soon to pass away, which placed an eschatological limit on the legitimacy of rulers other than God.

Paul's development of the theme of judgment in Romans is indebted to apocalyptic eschatology and shares its political perspective. His emphasis on the corruption and judgment of the present is found chiefly in Romans 1:18-3:20, but Paul also extends his critique of 'this age' to his discussion of sin (Rom 5-6), the law (Rom 7), and the flesh (Rom 8). Paul's characterisation of these forces as apocalyptic powers of this age did not represent a spiritualization of what for apocalyptists included concrete historical processes, but was an extension and broadening of the apocalyptic vision. For Paul, the Christ event was a revelation which shattered previous expectations, but the political dimensions of God's judgment are included in Paul's (re)vision of apocalyptic hope.

Paul's exposition of God's judgment conflicted with Roman imperial ideology by including the imperial house within his critique. His gospel in Romans presents an alternative assessment of the world to that of Roman imperial ideology, and so implicitly presented an ideological challenge to it. Apocalyptic judgment functions as part of the background for Paul's instructions on subordination in Romans 13:1-7, because it raised the question of how believers should relate to the rulers of the world who would soon pass away. Despite the apocalyptic conviction that rulers are under God's judgment, Paul exhorts believers to respect and obey Roman officials (Rom 13:1-7).

Politics and Judgment in Apocalyptic Eschatology

The narrative schema of apocalyptic eschatology was related to disjunctive eschatology, the root of political themes in Jewish apocalyptic thought. It was

¹ Dan 7:21-22; 1 Enoch 92:5-9; 4 Ezra 11:1-46. Further supporting references are provided below.

precisely the break between the present and the future world which gave apocalyptic eschatology its potential for critique of the present. As Vielhauer notes, '[t]he old must first entirely pass away before the new, the holy, can be established in the final state.'² The motif of judgment assumed a variety of functions within the apocalypses. Fundamentally, it assured the righteous community that God was in control.³ Thus, those who oppressed Israel would receive their just desserts. Although the function of the judgment motif was community-orientated, it nevertheless retained a political dimension. Its 'hidden transcript' provided an alternative 'political' account of the relationship between rulers and ruled.⁴ By focusing on God's sovereignty and rule over all, the announcement of judgment radically qualified and limited the grandiose claims made by foreign rulers. It asserted quite explicitly that God would displace foreign rulers and establish his own kingdom.

Judgment appears as a common theme throughout the apocalyptic literature. (Dan 7:21-22; *1 Enoch* 1:3-9; 22; 4 Ezra 11:1-46; 2 *Baruch* 48:39-43). As a corollary of God's judgment, many apocalyptic texts depicted the present as sinful and in need of redemption (*1 Enoch* 92:3-9; 2 *Baruch* 48:33-38). The time of the end would involve a great tribulation, whether for believers or for the whole of creation.⁵ Following God's judgment, however, the darkness of the present world would give way to God's future rule. The judgment of the present in apocalyptic eschatology involved, then, both an ethical judgment of the end-time as corrupt and God's correlative condemnation of the present and future. Often the apocalypses explicitly describe rulers as part of the corrupt present and gleefully portray their destruction at God's coming (*1 Enoch* 46:4-7; 90:21-27; 91:7-9).

Although this eschatological story-line occurs throughout apocalyptic literature, there are differences over the identity of those 'judged' and the nature of the judgment. There is a clear development from the early to the later apocalyptic books. The most important feature of this development is the universalising of judgment. Whereas in

² Vielhauer, "Introduction to Apocalypses," 550.

³ For the function of judgment in Judaism, see Kuck, *Judgment and Community Conflict*, 53-68. For judgment in apocalyptic, see Calvin J. Roetzel, *Judgment in the Community: A Study of the Relationships between Eschatology and Ecclesiology in Paul* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1972).

⁴ For the 'hidden transcript', see Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, esp. 108-201.

⁵ 4 Ezra 9:3; 6:22; 2 *Baruch* 7:6; 1 *Enoch* 90. See Allison, *End of the Ages*, 5-25. Allison shows the diversity within this theme; tribulation could be associated with the past, present or future, it could be universal or specific, and it varied in length and importance within the different writings.

the earliest apocalyptic literature, judgment is specifically against rulers who have wronged God's people (Dan 12:1-2; *As. Mos.* 10; *T. Judah* 25), later apocalyptic works depict judgment as universal, whereby all will be called to account (4 Ezra 7:32-27; *T. Benj.* 10).⁶ Despite the universalising of judgment, even the later apocalyptic texts preserved an emphasis on the judgment of rulers. 4 Ezra, for instance, looks forward to the judgment of Rome (12 – 13), as well as depicting a universal, general judgment (7:32-37). This may be because the rulers were seen as representatives of the people and so liable for greater judgment.⁷ Further, foreign rule was seen by most Jews as an affront to God's sovereignty over his people, and so liable for judgment.

The book of Daniel contains both the setting of judgment, a period in which foreign rulers oppress Israel, and its consequence, God's wrath against the perpetrators of oppression. Although the theme of judgment against rulers is clear in Daniel 7 – 12 (7:10, 26; 8:25c; 12:1-3), the first half of Daniel appears to offer a more positive view of rulers.⁸ In Daniel 1 – 6, pagan kings serve God, and Jews are able to live in peace. The stories reveal that not all foreign rulers are bad rulers.⁹ In Daniel 1, for instance, Nebuchadnezzar recognises the wisdom of the exiled Jews and listens to their advice (Dan 1:18-21). Following Daniel's impressive dream interpretation (2:31-45), he makes Daniel a ruler in Babylon (2:46-49). Even though unscrupulous subjects might mislead rulers (3:8-23), Jewish faithfulness testifies to kings and leads them to honour God (3:24-30). Daniel 2:20-21 connects this relatively positive portrayal of rulers to God's sovereignty;

Daniel said: "Blessed by the name of God from age to age, for wisdom and power are his. He changes times and seasons, deposes kings and sets up kings; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding"

⁶ For the best discussion of this, see Nicklesburg, *Resurrection*, 170-176. A corollary of this was that redemption (specifically in terms of apocalyptic eschatology) also became universalised, from a 'redemption' of those persecuted for their faithfulness (or who died unjustly) to a redemption of all the righteous.

⁷ See Wis 6:1-11, where power brings responsibility.

⁸ For theories of the development of Daniel, see Collins, *Daniel*, 24-38; Goldingay, *Daniel*, 326-328; Hartman, *Book of Daniel*, 9-18.

⁹ Goldingay helpfully shows how the tensions between Daniel 1 – 6 and Daniel 7 – 12 complement one another, although they are real tensions; Goldingay, *Daniel*, 329-334.

Although there is a contrast between Daniel 1 – 6 and 7 – 12 in their attitude to rulers, the positive depiction of rulers in Daniel 1 – 6 relates for the readers to a bygone era, which contrasts with the apocalyptic time in which they live. Within the first half of the book, the dream in Daniel 2 shows that an evil kingdom will arise in the future and be destroyed by God (Dan 2:31-45). The vision depicts a statue constructed of four different metals (2:31-35), each of which represents a different regime (2:37-43).¹⁰ The statue is struck by a stone (the kingdom of God; 2:44) and destroyed. Regardless of the ‘original meaning’ of the vision, within the context of the present book of Daniel, the gold head represents the Babylonian kingdom, the silver arms and chest represent the Median kingdom, the bronze midriff and thighs symbolises the Persian regime, and the iron legs and feet (combined with clay) represent the Macedonian Greeks.¹¹ The descending order of metals does not indicate the deterioration of the world, but rather the different strengths of the kingdoms.¹² The last kingdom is iron but mixed with clay (2:33), suggesting its weakness and transience (2:41-43). The ‘stone that struck the statue’ totally destroys it, showing that the emergence of God’s kingdom will render all kingdoms as chaff in the wind. The stone is transformed into a great mountain filling the earth, a symbol of God’s future sovereignty (Isa 11:9; Mic 4:1; Ezek 17:23).¹³ Daniel 2:36-45 affirms a future judgment of earthly kingdoms and the emergence of God’s eternal kingdom (2:44-45).

Daniel 2 shows that at the time of the end foreign rulers would be part of the evil forces allied against God’s people. The positive depiction of foreign rulers in Daniel 1 – 6, then, relates to a previous era, not to the times of the end. The visions in Daniel 7 – 12, like Daniel 2:36-45, deal explicitly with this end-time period, and depict judgment against Antiochus IV Epiphanes and the kingdoms of the world.¹⁴ The

¹⁰ Ancient parallels to representing kingdoms as different types of metals are found in Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 1.109-201, Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, i. 89-414, and the Persian document *Bahman Yasht* chap. 1. See Collins, *Daniel*, 162-165; Hartman, *Book of Daniel*, 146.

¹¹ Thus, in its present form, the four kingdoms in chap. 2 refer to the same four kingdoms represented by ‘beasts’ in chap. 7. See Collins, *Daniel*, 166-170; Hartman, *Book of Daniel*, 149-150. Goldingay suggests that the vision, if considered as a self-contained unit, perhaps alludes to Nebuchadnezzar and three of his successors; Goldingay, *Daniel*, 49-51. Considering the historical inaccuracies of earlier history in Daniel (and so the author’s lack of historical information), this seems unlikely. Goldingay also notes that within Daniel as a whole the four regimes span from Nebuchadnezzar to Cyrus.

¹² Goldingay, *Daniel*, 49.

¹³ Hartman, *Book of Daniel*, 149-150; Goldingay, *Daniel*, 51-52.

¹⁴ For the setting of these visions, see Collins, *Daniel*, 61-71.

visions reflect the manner in which apocalyptic eschatology traversed the political sphere. Although the time of the end is depicted in heavily symbolic language, with transcendent forces granted a prominent role, the end time brings an end to foreign rulers. The nations of the earth will be judged for their oppression of Israel. As Collins notes, the visions in Daniel 7 – 12 is concerned with, ‘the removal of the sinful kingdom of the beast and the affirmation of the sovereignty of God.’¹⁵

Daniel 7 includes the famous vision of the four beasts and the Son of Man (7:1-14), followed by its interpretation (7:15-27). The vision depicts four different beasts, each of which represents a particular kingdom. The first beast is similar to a lion with an eagle’s wings, and symbolises the Babylonian kingdom; the second beast is a bear with three prominent tusks, and represents the kingdom of the Medes; the third beast is a leopard with four wings and four heads, and symbolises the Persian kingdom.¹⁶ The fourth beast is described in most detail, and is depicted as a hideous creature with great iron teeth and ten horns. A new horn arises out of the beast, and displaces three earlier horns. The interpretation of the vision focuses on the fourth beast, which is described as unique and uniquely destructive (7:19). The angel tells Daniel that the fourth kingdom, ‘shall devour the whole earth, and trample it down, and break it to pieces’ (7:23b). The single horn which arises from the beast is interpreted as a king who arises after ten kings and displaces three further kings (7:24).¹⁷ The passage refers to Antiochus IV Epiphanes, and alludes to his attempt to ban the observance of the Sabbath and Jewish festivals (Dan 7:25; cf., 1 Macc 1:45; 2 Macc 6:6).¹⁸

The climax of Daniel 7 is the judgment scene itself. The ‘Ancient One’ on the throne opens the books of judgment and destroys the beast with fire (7:9-12). The interpretation of this judgment scene is found in 7:26-27. Within the heavenly court, the fourth beast is declared guilty. The destruction of the beasts represents the end of foreign domination over Israel (7:11-12).¹⁹ The court removes the power of the

¹⁵ Collins, *Daniel*, 66.

¹⁶ For the historical inaccuracies involved in Daniel’s vision (particularly its depiction of a Median kingdom following the Babylonian), as well as a discussion of the different kingdoms, see Hartman, *Book of Daniel*, 28-42.

¹⁷ The identity of the ten kings and the three uprooted kings is a matter of contention. For various views, see Goldingay, *Daniel*, 179-180; Collins, *Daniel*, 320-321.

¹⁸ Collins, *Daniel*, 327. Goldingay, however, thinks that this refers to Antiochus’ attempt to shape history according to his will, rather than God’s will; Goldingay, *Daniel*, 180-181.

¹⁹ Note the qualification in 7:12b, their ‘lives were prolonged for a season and a time.’

kingdoms of the earth, and presents it to 'the people of the holy ones of the Most High' (7:27). The recipients of the kingdom in this verse are the faithful Jews persecuted by Antiochus IV Epiphanes, who are under the guardianship of angels (the 'holy ones').²⁰ Although specific details are not provided, the judgment of the fourth beast implies the destruction of the Seleucids. Heavenly judgment has its earthly corollary in the displacement of foreign rule over Israel and the establishment of God's rule over Israel and, through Israel, over the earth.

Daniel 8 records the vision of the Ram and the Goat (8:1-15), and its interpretation by the angel Gabriel (8:16-26). The ram has two horns, a shorter and a longer, which respectively represent the Median and the Persian kingdoms (8:20). The male goat from the west symbolises the Macedonian kingdom (8:21). Within the vision, the ram battles against the male goat, but the goat emerges victorious. Following its victory over the ram, the goat's horn splits into four further horns, which refers to the break-up of the kingdom following the death of Alexander the Great. Following a short overview of Hellenistic history, Daniel 8 deals with the final period of the Seleucids (8:9-14). The vision describes a little horn which,

grew as high as the host of heaven. It threw down to the earth some of the host and some of the stars, and trampled on them. Even against the prince of the host it acted arrogantly; it took the regular burnt offering away from him and overthrew the place of his sanctuary. (8:10-11).

The description clearly refers to Antiochus IV Epiphanes. Antiochus overthrows the Temple practices, and so 'acts arrogantly' against the 'prince of the host' (God). The vision gives a limit to the activities of this figure, referring to the period in which the sanctuary would lie in Ruins (8:14).²¹

In contrast to the lengthy judgment scene in Daniel 7, Daniel 8 alludes to the judgment of Antiochus IV Epiphanes in a single line; 'he shall be broken, and not by human hands' (Dan 8:25c) The verse emphasises the transcendent nature of the judgment, as well as rejecting military activity against the Seleucid kingdom, and so

²⁰ Goldingay, *Daniel*, 181-182.

²¹ 'For two thousand three hundred evenings and mornings.' This refers to the time of the morning and evening sacrifice, which would be missed without a temple. The temple was purified after three years, whereas this prediction gives a longer time period, suggesting its composition before 164 BCE. See Collins, *Daniel*, 336.

implicitly the activities of the Maccabees.²² Despite the emphasis on God's activity, the vision affirms a historical judgment of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, which will take place following the period allotted for the desecration of the sanctuary. Daniel 8 assures its readers that God will destroy the power of the Seleucid kingdom.

Daniel 9 is a record of Daniel's prayer for Israel (9:3-19) and the angelic response which interprets the vision of Jeremiah (9:20-27).²³ Jeremiah's vision is mentioned by Daniel at the beginning his prayer (9:2), and refers to the prediction that Babylonian domination over Israel would last for seventy years (Jer 25:11-12; 29:10).²⁴ The persecution of Jews under Antiochus IV Epiphanes makes a literal reading of 'seventy years' problematic for the author, as it is clear that foreign domination still exists. Thus, the angel reinterprets the seventy years of foreign dominaton as 'seventy weeks [of years]' (490 years) (9:24). The author of Daniel applies the prediction to the end of Antiochus IV Epiphanes.

Daniel 9:24-25 gives a brief overview of the 'seventy weeks', including the end of exile and the construction of the temple.²⁵ Daniel 9:26-27 focuses on the last seven years. Following the murder of the 'anoointed one' (Onias III),²⁶ the city and the sanctuary are destroyed. Wars take place and a desolation occurs (9:26). Daniel 9:27 refers to a 'strong covenant with many,' which probably alludes to those Jews who supported the Hellenizing agenda of Antiochus IV Epiphanes.²⁷ Antiochus also brings an end to sacrifices and establishes the 'abomination of desolation'.

Like the vision of Daniel 8, the judgment of Antiochus IV Epiphanes is noted in a single line. The end will not come, 'until the decreed end is poured out upon the desolator.' The 'decreed end' refers to God's foreordained judgment against the

²² Goldingay argues that this does not *necessarily* rule out violent resistance; 'It is the *fact* of Antiochus's fall, not the means, that the vision emphasizes,' *Daniel*, 218. In view of disagreements in the Jewish community at the time on the appropriate response to foreign rulers, and taking into account the emphasis in Daniel that martyrs will be vindicated (12:1-3), it seems likely that the text is also directed against violent resistance.

²³ Hartman argues that the prayer is a later insertion into the text; Hartman, *Book of Daniel*, 245-246.

²⁴ The 'seventy years' in Jeremiah is probably a symbolic number, indicating a very long time. Later writers, however, interpreted the 'seventy years' literally (Zech 1:2; 2 Chron 36:20-23); Hartman, *Book of Daniel*, 246-247.

²⁵ The reference to the 'anoointed leader' in 9:25 is probably to Joshua (cf., Zech 4:14); Collins, *Daniel*, 355.

²⁶ Hartman, *Book of Daniel*, 252; Goldingay, *Daniel*, 202.

²⁷ Collins, *Daniel*, 357.

Seleucid usurper. Although the manner of displacement is not described, Daniel 8 assures its readers that Antiochus will soon be destroyed. Judgment will come upon the wicked king.

The vision of Daniel 10 – 12 focuses on the conflict between the Ptolemies and the Seleucids, ending with the actions of Antiochus IV Epiphanes. Unlike the other visions of Daniel 7 – 12, Daniel 10 – 12 also depicts a further stage of future judgment, in which judgment follows a resurrection of the righteous and the oppressors.

In Daniel 10:1 – 11:1, an angel appears to Daniel on the banks of the Tigris. Following Daniel's amazement at seeing the angel, the angel raises him up and tells him of his recent battles with the princes of the nations. The angel had fought the prince of Persia with the help of the angel Michael, but had left Michael alone in the battle in order to come to Daniel (Dan 10:13-14). The angel tells Daniel not to fear and assures him that he will soon rejoin the battle with the prince of Persia, as well as fighting the prince of Greece at a later stage (10:18-20). The belief in the 'princes of the nations' reflected in Daniel 10 – 12 is found in other apocalyptic texts (*Jub* 15:31-32; *1 Enoch* 20:5; 89:59-67), and also throughout Ancient Near Eastern literature.²⁸ The author of Daniel depicts a close relationship between angelic battles and earthly events. Thus, the angelic victory over the heavenly princes of various nations leads to the destruction of the nations on earth. The angel reveals the future battle with the prince of Greece (Dan 10:20b), which will determine Jewish victory over the Seleucids. Political events are mirrored or, better, determined in the heavenly realm. The angelic revelation of heavenly events to Daniel do not simply unveil unknown mysteries, but assure the readers that faithful Jews will survive because of their angelic guardians.

In Daniel 11, the angel describes to Daniel the future events. He notes the end of Persian domination and the ascent of the 'warrior king', a reference to Alexander the Great, whose kingdom is will be divided, 'among the four winds of heaven' (Dan 11:43-44). The angel continues the account of events to come, and includes details of battles between the 'king of the north' and the 'king of the south'. This climax of the vision, however, is found in the events surrounding Antiochus IV Epiphanes (11:25-

²⁸ See Hartman, *Book of Daniel*, 282-284.

45). Antiochus Epiphanes is described as a 'contemptible person on whom royal majesty has not been confirmed' (11:21), a reference to his usurpation of the throne.²⁹ Antiochus' desecration of the Temple (11:31) and persecution of faithful Jews (11:33) are a climactic part of the future era. The angel notes that despite his wicked deeds, Antiochus, 'shall prosper until the period of wrath is completed, for what is determined shall be done' (11:36b). Even the wickedness of Antiochus IV Epiphanes plays a part in God's plan.

Following the description of Antiochus' persecution of the Jews, Daniel presents an intriguing prophecy of Antiochus' future actions and final downfall (Dan 11:40-45). The text refers to Antiochus' victory over the 'king of the South' and his subjugation of neighbouring countries; 'He shall become ruler of the treasures of gold and of silver, and all the riches of Egypt; and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall follow in his train' (11:43). Following his victory, Antiochus will receive 'worrying reports' and will begin to destroy those under him (11:44). The lack of correspondence between 11:40-45 makes it likely that the text was written *before* Antiochus' death as an 'imaginative prophecy' of the final events.³⁰ The prediction is modelled on scriptural texts, in which foreigners invade Israel (Psalm 2; Joel 3:2; Zech 14:2-12). As in the earlier visions, however, Antiochus will finally be destroyed. The final verse of Daniel 11 depicts Antiochus camping out in the land of Israel, prepared for war, followed by his abrupt death.³¹

Following Antiochus' death, Daniel offers a snapshot of the future in which predicted history merges into transcendent eschatology (Dan 12:1-3). In Daniel 12:1-3, the righteous and those who persecuted them are raised from the dead for judgment. This is the first and possibly only reference to literal resurrection within the Jewish scriptures. This text, however, does not propose a universal judgment and resurrection, but only a resurrection to judgment of those who had persecuted the righteous, and a resurrection to glory of the faithful who had died.³² In other Jewish texts, judgment is universalised, but here resurrection assures the readers that the

²⁹ Collins, *Daniel*, 382.

³⁰ Hartman, *Book of Daniel*, 303-305.

³¹ 'he shall come to his end with no one to help him,' (Dan 11:45b).

³² 'Many' are raised from the dead, but not all. Cf., Nickelsburg, *Resurrection*, 11-27; Hartman, *Book of Daniel*, 307-308.

oppressors will be judged and those who died for their faith will live again. Post-resurrection judgment is a response to political events within history. This form of judgment ensures that the oppressors of the faithful will receive their condemnation.

Throughout the visions of Daniel 7 – 12, judgment always involves the destruction or displacement of foreign rulers. Daniel focuses judgment on Antiochus IV Epiphanes, who was persecuting faithful Jews at the time the author wrote. Although the judgment in Daniel takes on cosmological features (12:1-3), the majority of judgment scenes depict judgment as decidedly concrete, involving Israel's victory and the subjection of foreign nations. Heavily symbolic language is used in Daniel to depict this judgment. The imagery used is predominantly metaphorical; beasts are kingdoms, horns are kings, stars are angels. As well as employing metaphor, however, Daniel depicts a spiritual realm above or alongside the earthly realm. This level of his narrative is not simply metaphorical, as if the angels are simply symbols for the kingdoms they stand in for, but is part of the apocalyptic mind-set in which angelic powers and forces in the heavenly realm influence and infiltrate the story, and storey, of the earth.³³ The historicity of judgment is not minimised by its transcendent dimension. Rather, it assures readers that heavenly entities will ensure the end of foreign rule over Israel. Judgment involves the disruption and dissolution of earthly kingdoms, as well as a future, post-resurrection judgment in which those who had persecuted the faithful Jews receive their just recompense.

The central eschatological theme throughout *1 Enoch* is the judgment. As Nicklesburg notes, 'There is scarcely a page in *1 Enoch* that is not in some sense related to the expectation of an impending divine judgment that will deal with human sin and unrighteousness, and the angelic rebellions that are in one way or another related to them.'³⁴ The centrality of God's judgment in *1 Enoch* relates to its emphasis on the social and political dimension of sin. People with power are

³³ Thus, there is a vertical and horizontal dimension to the 'spiritual' realm. Spiritual powers exist in a realm above earth (in another storey of God's creation, if you like), but the activity of spiritual beings increases at the end-time, so apocalyptists frequently write about spiritual battles immediately preceding the consummation of God's plan. As Nickelsburg notes, 'The apocalyptist views reality on two separate but related levels. Events on earth have their counterparts in heaven and vice versa,' George W. E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature Between the Bible and the Mishnah: A Historical and Literary Introduction* (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1981), 85.

³⁴ George W. E. Nickelsburg, "The Apocalyptic Construction of Reality in 1 Enoch," in *Mysteries and Revelations: Apocalyptic Studies since the Uppsala Colloquium*, JSPSup, ed. John J. Collins and James H. Charlesworth (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), 53.

generally depicted as godless representatives of the age. I will focus on the theme of judgment in 1 Enoch in its two 'historical apocalypses', the *Book of Dreams* and the *Apocalypse of Weeks*.

The *Book of Dreams* begins with the *Vision of the Deluge* (1 Enoch 83 – 84), which is shorter and less well known than second Dream-Vision (the *Animal Apocalypse*; 1 Enoch 85 – 90).³⁵ The *Vision of the Deluge* focuses on the consequences of human sin, rather than its nature or manifestations. Human sin leads to God's judgment and condemnation of the world. Only a remnant survives. The vision proper (83:3b-4) follows a short introduction (83:1-3a) and precedes an interpretation and prayer to God (83:5 – 84:6). The material which surrounds the vision, as well as its context within the *Book of Dreams*, provides clues to its purpose.

The opening to the vision introduces the *Book of Dreams* as a whole. Enoch notes that his dream was the first of two visions he saw before his marriage, a vision he had while sleeping at his grandfather's house (1 Enoch 83:2-3). The two Dream-Visions together reveal God's eschatological judgment of humanity and the redemption of a faithful remnant.

The vision of the deluge is very small and centres on the destruction of the earth (1 Enoch 83:3-5). Enoch dreams of the 'sky being hurled down and snatched and falling upon the earth', followed by the earth itself, 'being swallowed up into the great abyss' (83:3-4). The language of the text echoes language used in the flood narratives and parallels other sections of 1 Enoch which allude to the Noahic flood.³⁶ The vision refers, at least at one level, to the flood at the time of Noah.

Following Enoch's vision, Mahalalel, Enoch's grandfather, wakes Enoch from his sleep and inquires after the dream that led Enoch to cry out (1 Enoch 83:6). Although an angel is typically the interpreter of visions elsewhere in 1 Enoch (1 Enoch 19:1-2; 79:6; 53:4-5) and in other apocalyptic texts (Dan 8:15-26; 4 Ezra 10:38-39), Mahalalel acts as the interpreter in this text. The wise grandfather explains to Enoch the dream's significance, claiming that Enoch saw, 'all the sins of the whole world as

³⁵ For material on the Animal Apocalypse, see the commentaries by Black, Nickelsburg, Charles etc. and the helpful recent monograph by Tiller, *Animal Apocalypse*.

³⁶ Cf., 10:1-3; 89:1-9. The account in the *Animal Apocalypse* (1 Enoch 89:1-9) is probably independent to that found in 83:3-5, even if they are part of the same book (Black, 1 Enoch, 20).

it was sinking into the abyss and being destroyed with great destruction.’ (*1 Enoch* 83:7).

The interpretation of the vision leads Enoch to pray for mercy over Israel and for the salvation of a faithful remnant (83:10). Following his prayer, Enoch witnesses the beauty and order of the earth and cosmos, which assures him of God’s faithfulness in answering his prayer (83:11).³⁷ The record of the prayer itself is given in chapter 84. God is proclaimed as the ‘King of kings and God of the whole earth’ and praised for his wisdom, creative power, and role as judge. Enoch requests that this royal God would have mercy by preserving a remnant of his people.

Enoch’s vision of destruction recalls the story of Noah and the flood, but is also typological for the final judgment. The finality of the judgment in the vision of the deluge, and its eschatological referent, is reflected in 84:4, where the destruction is called the ‘great day of judgment’. God’s wrath remains upon his people until that day, which suggests that redemption follows destruction. The dramatic and cosmic vision of the flood also suggests its reference to the final judgment, while elsewhere in *1 Enoch* the flood assumes eschatological significance.³⁸ Finally, the placement of this vision within the *Book of Dreams* supports an eschatological reading of this vision.

In the *Vision of the Deluge*, then, the time of the end finds an analogy in the time of Noah. The vision emphasises the universality of God’s judgment; the whole world will fold in on itself, pulled into the abyss by its sin. The focus is not on the particular sins or agents of sin, but on the judgment itself.³⁹ The message of the *Vision of the Deluge* is that all will be judged. Only a remnant of the faithful will survive.

³⁷ The translation in the main text of Isaac is confusing, introducing verse 11 with ‘Had I descended underneath...’. The alternative offered in the footnotes is more likely, ‘When I descended underneath...’ (see the translations offered by Black and Nickelsburg for a similar sense). The narrator recalls how Enoch goes outside following his prayer and observes the order of the cosmos. Nickelsburg notes that Enoch’s observation of cosmic order functions in a manner similar to the rainbow for Noah, indicating God’s faithfulness to his promise; Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch* 1, 351.

³⁸ See *1 Enoch* 10:1-32, where the flood is followed by redemption. Note also the parallel between week 2 (the flood) and week 7 (the time of the author) in the *Apocalypse of Weeks*, Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch*, 443-444.

³⁹ In its current literary context, the second Dream Vision (the *Animal Apocalypse*) explains the background to the judgment.

Although the universality of judgment does not single out the rulers as recipients of judgment, judgment includes foreign nations and sovereigns, as well as Jewish rulers, within its scope. Enoch's prayer for the survival of a remnant reflects the author's assumption that all else will pass away, including the rulers. The vision also affirms God's sovereignty over rulers by using a cluster of royal vocabulary for God in 84:2.⁴⁰ God is the true ruler, not others who claim to rule the earth. God is also depicted as the final judge, with judgment assuming primary importance in the eschatological sequence of the end.

In the *Animal Apocalypse* (1 Enoch 85-90), the second vision in the *Book of Dreams*, the deterioration of the world is connected to the historical and political history of Israel. The vision presents what Black calls a 'zoomorphic history,'⁴¹ in which animals represent nations and rulers. It recounts the story of Israel from Adam to the time of the Maccabean revolt, and on into the eschatological era. Judgment is a central theme in the work; both judgment on the nations which opposed the Jewish community, and judgment on the spiritual forces which had corrupted and perverted the world. God's judgment holds pride of place in the eschatological sequence of the end time.

As we noted earlier, the vision was produced around the time of the Maccabees, in response to the Hellenization of Judaea and the threat posed by the Seleucids to Jewish self-determination. The vision can be divided into three ages, with a white bull standing at the head of each age.⁴² The first age extends from Adam to the flood and includes the judgment of the Watchers (1 Enoch 85:3 – 89:8), the second age begins with the end of the flood and ends with the final judgment and restoration of Jerusalem (1 Enoch 89:9 – 90:36), and the final age is the age of eternal, eschatological life (1 Enoch 90:37-39). There is, as Tiller points out, typological connection between the first age and the last age. In particular, the 'snow white cow' of the end age (90:37) represents the eschatological counterpart to Adam, the 'snow white cow' of the creation (85:3).⁴³

⁴⁰ 'Blessed are you, O Great King... King of kings and God of the whole world, your authority and kingdom abide forever and ever; and your dominion throughout all the generation of generations ...' [italics mine].

⁴¹ Black, *1 Enoch*, 19.

⁴² Tiller, *Animal Apocalypse*, 15-18.

⁴³ Tiller, *Animal Apocalypse*, 19-20.

The use of animals for Israel and foreign nations is a central feature of the work. Although it finds precedents within the Hebrew Bible and in other Ancient Near Eastern literature, it is unparalleled in the extent to which these symbols appear within the vision. God's people in the *Animal Apocalypse* are depicted as cows, sheep and lambs. Significant figures within the history of Israel, however, are transformed from cows into humans, suggesting their proximity to God and the divine life. Thus, both Noah (89:1) and Moses (89:36) are depicted as changing from cows into humans. As humans, they construct the ark and the tabernacle.⁴⁴ As the vision approaches its end, sheep rather than cows become the main symbol for Jewish community. Significant figures from Israel's later days are described as 'rams' with large horns (*1 Enoch* 90:9, 37). A 'sheep', however, is not necessarily a positive character, as several of the sheep towards the end of the vision are depicted as 'dim sighted' (90:7, 26).

While 'sheep' and 'cows' represent 'pure' animals within the Jewish categories of purity found in Leviticus, the animals chosen to symbolise foreign nations are uniformly unclean, including lions, leopards, wolves, vultures, hawks, eagles and other unclean animals (89:10, 42, 55; 90:13).⁴⁵ The 'wolves' of 89:13-27 represent the Egyptians, the 'eagles' of 90:2, who lead the other unclean birds in attacking the sheep, are symbols for the Macedonian Greeks, and the 'ravens' of 90:8ff. represent the Seleucids.⁴⁶

In its depiction of foreign nations as unclean animals or 'black' bulls, the vision expresses hostility to nations which attacked and ruled over Israel. Although some strands of Jewish literature treat foreign rulers positively, the drastic situation which prompted this apocalypse led to a hostile assessment of all foreign rulers, with the Seleucids acting as the climax of the evil nations. The vision is also hostile to rulers within Israel itself. In the second age of the vision, and specifically in the post-exilic period, the leaders of Israel are represented as 'dim-sighted' sheep (89:74; 90:7). The author of the vision expresses hostility to the rulers of Israel preceding the work of

⁴⁴ Black, *1 Enoch*, 267.

⁴⁵ The exceptions to the rule are the neighbouring nations of Israel, such as the Edomites, who are represented as black bulls (89:12).

⁴⁶ For a discussion of the interpretation of the imagery, see Tiller, *Animal Apocalypse*, 28-36.

Judas Maccabeus.⁴⁷ The vision also positively supports the Maccabean revolt as a work of God. The text describes a main player in the revolt as a 'great horn' (90:9) which most interpreters take to be Judas Maccabeus.⁴⁸ Further, the military engagements of the Maccabees are viewed as part of God's work of judgment (90:13-14). Tiller describes the author of the *Animal Apocalypse* as representing, 'a militant, pro-independence, religious reform group.'⁴⁹

Judgment is a recurring theme in the vision's overview of Israel's history. In the first age, the author recalls the story of the Watchers, and depicts their punishment for leading God's people astray (*1 Enoch* 86 – 88). The flood is presented as a punishment for those whom the Watchers had corrupted (*1 Enoch* 88). In the second age, God's people are again disobedient, constantly turning away from God's will. God responds in judgment, but also restores his people following the judgment (*1 Enoch* 89:32-35, 41, 51-53). Following the destruction of Jerusalem, God punishes his people by dispersing them among the nations, and handing them over to angels of foreign nations who are given permission to enact punishment (*1 Enoch* 89:54-67). The seventy angels, however, exceed their mandate, and destroy more and more of the sheep (*1 Enoch* 89:65, 68-71).⁵⁰ The shepherds support and lead those oppressing Israel under the Maccabean revolt, and so God finally intervenes (*1 Enoch* 90:13-19). The angels, then, are responsible for Israel's suffering, rather than God or Israel, and so become subject to judgment (*1 Enoch* 90:25).

The final judgment takes place at the end of the second age and has two stages. The first stage is related to the Maccabean revolt (*1 Enoch* 90:13-19). The 'sheep' (Israel) fight against the unclean animals (foreign nations). God cooperates with those in revolt, allowing them to destroy the foreign nations who attack them. A battle takes place between the sheep (righteous Israel) and the beasts (foreign nations) (*1 Enoch* 90:13-19). The author depicts warfare as a means of God's judgment, and the Maccabean warriors as cooperating in God's process. The first stage of the judgment, then, is a military victory over the Seleucids.

⁴⁷ The author probably has in mind those leaders who endorsed the Hellenizing agenda of the Seleucids.

⁴⁸ Black, *1 Enoch*, 276; Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch*, 396-298 (for the present form of the vision); Charles, *Book of Enoch*, 208.

⁴⁹ Tiller, *Animal Apocalypse*, 126.

⁵⁰ For a discussion of the seventy shepherds, see Charles, *Book of Enoch*, 199-200.

Following the victory over the foreign nations, the author depicts God's judgment on the heavenly hosts (*1 Enoch* 90:20-29). The Lord sits on his throne and opens the sealed books. God judges the Watchers, who had previously been condemned to an (temporary) abyss (88:1-3), and condemns them to a permanent abyss of fire and flame. The Lord also judges the 'seventy shepherds', who represent the angels of the nations into which Israel was given over. Their 'guilt' relates to the extent to which they punished the Israelites. As well as the punishment of heavenly agents, a further stage of judgment depicts the destruction of the 'blinded sheep', the leaders of Israel who gave in to the Hellenizing agenda.

In the *Animal Apocalypse*, judgment takes place on the heavenly realm as well as on the earthly one. These realms are connected. While the *Vision of the Deluge* emphasises the universality of God's judgment, the *Animal Apocalypse* charts the nature of sin and the activity of rulers (heavenly and earthly) in provoking God's judgment. Spiritual and temporal rulers figure prominently in the judgment scenes. The rulers of the spirit world who are judged include the Watchers and the seventy Shepherds who were responsible for damaging Israel. The rulers of Israel are the 'blind sheep' who do not recognise the damage to Israel produced by Hellenising. The rulers of foreign nations are also condemned, and include the numerous unclean beasts (and 'dirty' clean ones) who viciously attack Israel. Judgment involves the end of foreign rule over Israel, and so is intrinsically political.

As well as the judgment scenes in the *Dream Visions*, the *Apocalypse of Weeks* (93:1-10; 91:11-17) grants a prominent place to judgment within its concise overview of world (and eschatological) history. Instances of judgment within Israel's history are paradigmatic for God's later eschatological judgment. Out of the ten weeks which the author surveys, three weeks involve stages of eschatological judgment.

The first 'week' in the apocalypse is described as a time of 'righteousness and justice',⁵¹ and is the week in which Enoch was born (*1 Enoch* 93:3). Following this initial period of righteousness, the second week sees the growth of 'evil things' and

⁵¹ Isaac's translation has, 'judgment and righteousness continued to endure' (similarly to Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch* I, 443), but the Ethiopic can also be translated 'judgment and righteousness was delayed', in which case sin began before Enoch's birth (so Black, *1 Enoch*, 287). The latter reading is consistent with the biblical account, but the former reading is better because it forms a parallel with the weeks after the tenth week in which 'goodness and righteousness' endure.

‘deceit’, followed by the ‘first consummation’ (1 *Enoch* 93:4a). The ‘first consummation’, the first judgment, is a reference to the Noahic flood, which mirrors the second and final consummation/judgment which takes place at the eschaton. Following the flood, from which Noah is saved, injustice increases even more (1 *Enoch* 93:4b). The postdiluvian world is a world in which sin and corruption flourish, a theme also found within the Hebrew Bible. In response to the growing injustice, Noah makes a ‘law for the sinners’, a reference to the covenant between God and Noah (Gen 8:20f.).⁵²

In weeks three to five, the author describes divine responses to the increase of unrighteousness. In week three, God elects his people, described by the author as an ‘eternal plant of righteousness’ (93:5). In week four, he gives them the law (93:6), and, in week five, establishes the temple and the monarchy (93:7). Despite these divine responses to human unrighteousness, God’s people lose wisdom in week six, which eventually leads to the destruction of Jerusalem and their exile (93:8). The fall of Jerusalem is a consequence of unrighteousness among the ‘plant of righteousness’.

The author describes his own period and the beginning of God’s future actions in week seven. The seventh week is a time of ‘an apostate generation,’ with people performing wicked, criminal deeds (93:9-10). Depravity of an entire generation is the precursor to God’s redemption. When things get the very worst, redemption will occur. At the end of the seventh week, God elects a remnant from within the, ‘eternal plant of righteousness’, who are granted the wisdom no longer possessed by the leaders of Israel. As with the *Book of Dreams*, the perspective is sectarian, indicating a negative assessment of Israel’s current leaders. The ‘remnant’, granted God’s revelation in the turbulent time, knows the truth about God’s future rule and plans, receiving ‘sevenfold instruction concerning all his flock’ (93:10c).

In week eight to ten, the author describes God’s heavenly and earthly judgment, as well as the beginning of redemption. Week eight is described as the ‘week of righteousness’, in which God’s judgment takes place through a military victory against sinners (91:12-13). The righteous take up the sword against the oppressors, and are rewarded for their righteousness in so doing. The ‘sinners’ here are in

⁵² Black, 1 *Enoch*, 289-290; Nickelsburg, 1 *Enoch* 1, 443-444. Both commentators also refer to Jubilees 7 – 8 as a possible background to this verse, in which Noah instructs his sons in following God will.

parallel with the 'oppressors', the foreign nations ruling over Israel. Although the text is pre-Maccabean, it parallels the Maccabean view that military force can be used for God and on God's behalf. A new house for God is constructed, drawing on Jewish traditions which looked forward to an ideal temple and city (Ezek 40 – 48; Isa 56:7-8).⁵³

Week nine depicts a further stage of God's judgment (91:14). Whereas week eight describes God's judgment – through his people – on the oppressors of Israel (foreign nations which have attacked it), week nine makes judgment universal. Judgment on Israel's enemies is extended to the 'deeds of sinners' over the whole earth.

Intriguingly, the author does not condemn all foreigners to condemnation. Those foreigners who are not condemned shall be transformed, and will begin to 'direct their sight in the path of righteousness.'⁵⁴

The final stage of judgment takes place in week ten of the sequence (91:15-16). Judgment is extended even further, reaching to heavens and to the cosmos itself. The first part of the judgment refers to condemnation of the 'Watchers', who are judged by the other angels. The cosmos is transformed in preparation for the redemption granted by God. A new heaven will replace the heaven which passes away. Following the tenth week, the apocalypse depicts the future as an infinite number of weeks in which righteousness reigns and sin is absent in the world (91:17).

The *Apocalypse of Weeks*, then, depicts the history of the world as descending further and further into deterioration. The climax of this deterioration gives rise to an 'apostate generation' within Israel, and creates the conditions for God's final, eschatological judgment. Judgment at the end is universal and extensive, but begins with judgment against the 'oppressors' of Israel. In week eight, God's people will also have a militant role to play in judging and executing sinners.

Although the author of the *Apocalypse of Weeks* wrote in week seven, his depiction of a military involvement by God's people in week eight clearly had political consequences. If the conditions were right, a military endeavour against the oppressors of Israel could be viewed as participation in God's eschatological judgment. It would signal the beginning of God's eschatological activity and

⁵³ Nickelsburg, *I Enoch* 1, 448-449.

⁵⁴ See Black, *Book of Enoch*, 293-294.

certainly the end of foreign rule over Israel. God's judgment involved the destruction of oppressors in Israel and the conversion of those foreigners who remain.

God's eschatological judgment is also a common theme in the speculative apocalypses of *1 Enoch*, even though they emphasise the vertical axis of revelation. While some texts stress the ubiquity of judgments, other passages focus on rulers and nations. Judgment is an eschatological act which by its very nature involves political ramifications.

The *Book of Watchers* is the first work within *1 Enoch* and was probably between the mid third century and the early second century BCE.⁵⁵ At least part of its purpose is the attempt to explain the origins of evil among humanity and, by extension, the continuing depravity within the world.⁵⁶ The *Book of Watchers* includes three main sections; an introduction and announcement of God's coming (*1 Enoch* 1 – 5), the story of the Watchers (*1 Enoch* 6 – 16), and Enoch's heavenly journeys (*1 Enoch* 17 – 36). The centrality of Enoch's journeys within the work, in which Enoch receives an overview of the cosmic set-up, characterises it as a speculative apocalypse.

Despite its emphasis on heavenly revelation, the *Book of Watchers* includes texts which speak of God's judgment.⁵⁷ The first chapter begins with an announcement of judgment at the coming of God. God's arrival leads the Watchers to tremble and the earth to shake (*1 Enoch* 1:3-7). Judgment will occur for all, including the righteous. While the righteous receive peace (1:8), the unrighteous can only expect destruction (1:9). This text acts not only as the introduction to the *Book of Watchers*,⁵⁸ but also in its present form to *1 Enoch* as a whole, highlighting the importance of judgment for its works.

⁵⁵ It is probably the second oldest work in the Corpus, following the *Astronomical Book*. For discussions of its date, see VanderKam, *Enoch*, 111-114; Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch* 1, 7; Collins makes the point that it was written in response to the general threat of Hellenization, rather than to some specific threat as such; Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 36-46.

⁵⁶ Part of the answer provided is, of course, the story of the Watchers, in which fallen angels bring sin into the world. See, Paolo Sacchi, "The Apocalyptic of the First Century: Sin and Judgment," in *Jewish Apocalyptic and its History*, JSNTSup, ed. James H. Charlesworth and Lester L. Grabbe (of series) (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990), 110-111; "The *Book of Watchers* and Apocalyptic," in *Jewish Apocalyptic and its History*, JSNTSup, ed. James H. Charlesworth and Lester L. Grabbe (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990).

⁵⁷ On judgment in the book of Watchers, see Kuck, *Judgment and Community Conflict*, 68-71.

⁵⁸ Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch* 1, 132-133.

The reference to the judgment of the heavenly realm in chapter one sets the stage for further allusions to the judgment of the Watchers throughout the work. *1 Enoch* 6 – 11 relates the story of the fall of the angels and their subsequent judgment. The angels ‘took wives’ upon the earth, giving birth to giants who slay humans. As well as mating with humans, and so violating the division between heavenly and earthly existence,⁵⁹ they taught humans skills and trades which became instruments of sin (6:1 – 8:4). The activity of the Watchers leads the good angels to petition the Lord on humanity’s behalf. God judges the Watchers by binding them into a great abyss, where they await the final judgment (10:12-13). The judgment of the Watchers is followed by the judgment of the unrighteous upon the earth, and the redemption and blessing of the remaining righteous (10:16 – 11:2).

In other sections of the *Book of Watchers*, heavenly and earthly judgment continues to be closely connected. In *1 Enoch* 21 – 22, Enoch view the place of punishment for angels and for humans.⁶⁰ In chapter 21, Enoch is shown the place of the fallen angels. He sees two areas within this vision: firstly, a ‘chaotic and terrible’ place in which the stars of heaven are bound (21:1-6) and, secondly, a huge, flaming abyss (21:7-10). The first place represents a temporary holding place for the fallen angels, while the flaming abyss is the future prison of the angles. In chapter 22, Uriel shows Enoch the scene for the judgment of the dead. Collins notes that this passage is, ‘*the earliest attestation of the judgment of the dead in Jewish tradition.*’⁶¹ As for the angels, there are also ‘holding bays’ for humankind in which souls are kept until the Day of Judgment (22:3-4). The souls of the dead, however, are separated into different categories.⁶² The righteous are firstly separated from sinners (22:9b), before a further three-fold division takes place among the sinners. In 22:10-11, the compartment contains sinners who escaped punishment for their sins during their lifetime, and so receive punishment in their post-mortem state. 22:12-13 are

⁵⁹ For the defilement of the angels, see *1 Enoch* 15:2-10. Nickelsburg notes that their defilement occurred on a number of levels: because of their illicit intercourse with women, their ritual defilement in sleeping with menstruating females and, most importantly, their corruption of the heavenly order; Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch* 1, 269.

⁶⁰ Enoch had passed this area earlier in the vision (18:10-16), but here receives a closer view.

⁶¹ Collins, “From Prophecy to Apocalypticism,” 139.

⁶² There are contradictions within this text, with vs.2 referring to four compartments, and vs. 3 speaking of three. These probably reflect different stages of the text’s composition. See Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch* 1, 302-303.

somewhat difficult to interpret, and include textual difficulties. Verse 12 probably refers to sinners who died violently, and so seek justice for their death,⁶³ and verse 13 refers to those who have already been judged during their lifetime, possibly a reference to those who had died by the flood.⁶⁴ Although this post-mortem judgment functions differently than the eschatological, public judgments elsewhere throughout 1 Enoch, it precedes the future judgment of the earth. Thus, the holding places of the souls are temporary, and await the final judgment by God.

In the *Similitudes of Enoch*, Enoch views cosmic secrets of the order of the universe and the eschatological period. Although 1 Enoch 37 – 71 is divided into three parables, the structural relationship between the parables and within them is uncertain. As Stone notes, ‘In general, the *Similitudes* does not seem to be created upon a clear, unified structure or a systematic development of ideas.’⁶⁵ Nevertheless, certain themes and ideas relevant for apocalyptic eschatology surface throughout the Parables. The date of this work continues to be a subject of scholarly debate. Earlier scholars argued that the work was as early as the first century BCE.⁶⁶ Following the discovery of Aramaic fragments of 1 Enoch at Qumran, however, Milik argued that the absence of the *Similitudes* in the finds, along with other factors, indicates a date as late as 270 CE, as well as the Christian composition of the work.⁶⁷ Milik’s theory has been heavily criticised, and the general consensus now dates the *Similitudes* in the first century CE, whether pre-70,⁶⁸ or post-70.⁶⁹ The Jewish character of the work also seems assured.⁷⁰

⁶³ Black suggests that this compartment contains the righteous who had died violently (1 Enoch, 167-168), but they would surely be with the rest of the righteous, so Nickelsburg, 1 Enoch 1, 308.

⁶⁴ Nickelsburg, 1 Enoch 1, 308-309.

⁶⁵ Stone, “Apocalyptic Literature,” 403.

⁶⁶ APOT 2, 170-171. Charles argues that the ‘kings and the mighty’ within the Parables refer to the Macabean rulers and their Sadducee supporters.

⁶⁷ Milik, *Books of Enoch*, 1-135.

⁶⁸ Christopher L. Mearns, “Dating the Similitudes of Enoch,” *NTS* 25 (1979), 360-369; Black, 1 Enoch, 181-188.

⁶⁹ M. A. Knibb, “The Date of the Parables of Enoch: A Critical Review,” *NTS* 25 (1979), 345-359. Knibb points out the similarities between the Similitudes and 4 Ezra/2 Baruch as part of his evidence, 358-359.

⁷⁰ Knibb, “Date,” 350-352.

Within the *Similitudes*, the ‘elect one,’ a central figure, acts as God’s vice-regent upon the earth and heavens at the time of the end. His role as judge is particularly prominent. Because the *Similitudes* will be dealt with in more detail in chapter four, where the eschatological redeemer figure will be discussed, I will here choose two examples of judgment within the work. More so than other works of *1 Enoch*, the *Similitudes* stress that the recipients of judgment include the rulers of the earth (as well as heavenly rulers).

1 Enoch 38 follows the introduction to the *Similitudes of Enoch*, and is the introductory text to the first Similitude (38 – 44). Although much of this particular parable is concerned with heavenly secrets (41:3 – 44), its initial announcement that God will judge the wicked sets the scene for the development of this theme throughout the work. The text is poetic or hymnal, and clearly visionary, so it is unwise to press details over-literally. Judgment is, however, a clear theme throughout chapter 38. Judgment is associated with the appearance of the ‘congregation of the righteous’ (38:1), an allusion to the eschatological community of the end, and also with the appearance of the ‘Righteous One’, who will lead the nations (38:29). The recipients of judgment are characterised as ‘sinners,’ ‘those who deny the name of the Lord of Spirits,’ and ‘the wicked ones’. The text explicitly associates rulers with sinners. Thus, the destructions of sinners means neither ‘rulers nor powers’ would rule the earth, as they would be unable to stand in the light of the holy ones (38:4). More clearly, the text announces that ‘kings and rulers shall perish’. They shall be handed over to the ‘righteous and holy ones’ to be destroyed (38:5). The figure of the Righteous One/Son of Man plays a key role in the judgment of sinners throughout this text. Throughout the *Similitudes of Enoch*, it is often precisely the denial of the ‘Son of Man’ which leads to the judgment of kings and rulers of the earth (46:4-5; 48:8-10). His judgment leads to their destruction.

A detailed judgment scene is also found in *1 Enoch* 62 – 63, which occurs in the third Parable.⁷¹ Again, the Elect One/Son of Man judges the ruling classes, condemning them to darkness, while rewarding the righteous and elect ones. The ruling classes include, ‘the kings, the governors, the high officials, and the landlords’ (62:1, 3). The ‘landlords’, of course, refer to the gentile rulers who rule over the Jews

⁷¹ Charles notes that this is a lengthy treatment of the subject treated briefly in 46:4-10; 48:8-10; and 53 – 54:3; Charles, *Book of Enoch*, 122.

and the known world.⁷² The rulers are humbled, but the Elect One sits on a throne and acts in judgment (62:6-9). The Elect One condemns the rulers and hands them to the angels of punishment (62:11), and the righteous rejoice at their judgment (61:12). In chapter 63, the vision depicts the scene following the condemnation of the rulers. Realising their guilt, the rulers appeal to the angels of punishment by repenting. The rulers worship the Lord of Spirits, acknowledging that he is the, 'Lord of kings, the Lord of rulers, and the Master of the rich' (63:2). Despite their repentance, they are nevertheless driven from the presence of the Son of Man. The author of the *Similitudes of Enoch* clearly believed that judgment would focus on those in positions of power. The strong condemnation of foreign rulers throughout the *Similitudes* strongly reflects the political dimensions of apocalyptic eschatology.

Examples of the judgment motif can also be culled from the remaining works of 1 Enoch. The Astronomical Books include allusions to eschatological judgment, including *1 Enoch* 80, in which the disorder of nature and the cosmos corresponds to the destruction of rulers (*1 Enoch* 80:2-8).⁷³ The second century BCE *Epistle of Enoch* includes the condemnation of the unrighteous and a reference to their judgment, alongside its numerous ethical admonitions to the righteous.⁷⁴ Sinners are characterised as those in positions of power and wealth (96:5-7), and Enoch predicts the increasing violence preceding the end assize (91:1-6). Rulers will be particularly guilty of sin (97:7).

In *1 Enoch*, Judgment is most clearly a theme in the *Book of Dreams* and the *Apocalypse of Weeks*, but it also appears throughout the other sections of the work. Judgment is viewed as a primary event in the sequence of the end. Although there is diversity among the judgment texts in *1 Enoch*, particularly in the depiction of the manner and place of God's judgment, there are common themes within the judgment texts. Firstly, whereas the focus of judgment in Daniel was on those who persecute God's people, the tendency in *1 Enoch* is to see judgment as universal. Although, its earlier texts are more restricted in their description of judgment, most of the texts in

⁷² See Black, who translates the term, 'those who possess the earth'; Black, *1 Enoch*, 235.

⁷³ See also 72:1, in which Enoch notes that Uriel also showed him, 'the nature of the years of the world unto eternity, till the new creation which abides forever is created.'

⁷⁴ The Epistle of Enoch has been dated both in the early and the late second century BCE. For discussions of date and content, see Black, *1 Enoch*, 22-23; Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 427-428; Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 52-53.

1 Enoch universalise judgment. This is clear in the two historical apocalypses, as well as the *Epistle of Enoch* and the *Similitudes of Enoch*. The tendency towards universalising judgment means that the earlier texts are read in universal terms and incorporated into the tradition.⁷⁵ Although the origins of the judgment motif in contexts of persecution reflect its political implications, its universalising tendency continues to include political authorities within its scope. Secondly, judgment throughout *1 Enoch* pertains to both the heavenly realm and the earthly realm. Judgment of the spiritual world has its corollary in judgment of the earth, reflecting that the apocalyptic authors saw heavenly realities as determinative for earthly existence and life. Thus, heavenly events mirror and infuse earthly reality. The earthly, political substance of life is interpreted and challenged by a broader framework in which causality is more complex than ‘worldly’ appearances would suggest. Even though judgment is a transcendent act, however, it clearly has historical and political repercussions, not least the end of foreign rule over Israel.

As noted earlier, one of the recurring complaints of 4 Ezra, and the central problem faced by its author, was the suffering of Israel, which had culminated in the destruction of the Temple. 4 Ezra reflected the pain and grief of the Jewish community following this traumatic event, and attempted to resolve the theological tension left in its wake.⁷⁶ The questions faced by the author surface in 4:23, where Ezra asks the angel,

about those things that we daily experience: why Israel has been given over to the Gentiles in disgrace; why the people whom you loved has been given over to godless tribes, and the law of our ancestors has been brought to destruction and the written covenants no longer exist (4:23)

The eschatological teaching in 4 Ezra is a means by which the author copes with the tragedy of 70 CE, and includes the specific affirmation that those responsible for the destruction of Jerusalem will be judged.⁷⁷ The consolation offered by the angel’s

⁷⁵ For this tendency, see Nickelsburg, *Resurrection*, 174-176.

⁷⁶ For a discussion of the way in which the author copes with ‘cognitive dissonance,’ see Esler, “Social Function,” 99-123. Longenecker also notes that one of the social functions of 4 Ezra was the ‘management of sorrow,’ Longenecker, “Locating 4 Ezra,” 285-288.

⁷⁷ This is a theme shared within the divergent eschatological expectations expressed within the visions of this work. For a discussion of the diverse eschatologies within 4 Ezra, see Rowley, *Relevance of Apocalyptic*, 94-98; Stone, *4 Ezra*, 204-205.

assurance, however, awaits the transformation of Ezra in section four (4 Ezra 9:26 – 10:59) before Ezra fully accepts it.

There are a number of judgment scenarios within 4 Ezra. Some references to the judgment are brief and allusive, but longer judgment scenes include 7:26-44; 7:78-99; 11:1-46; and 13:8-11. The judgment scenes are sometimes inconsistent, which led previous interpreters to propose different sources and traditions behind the texts.⁷⁸ The overall unity of the work, however, makes it more likely that the author offers different perspectives on the means and manner of judgment, while he may have also combined traditions from various sources. The desire for complete consistency among modern interpreters is not one that the author seems to have shared.

Within the dialogues between Uriel and Ezra, Uriel avoids giving a precise time scale to the final events.⁷⁹ He does, however, give a series of metaphors which suggest that the end is imminent. The different metaphors for the end-time are taken from the spheres of nature – human relationships, agriculture, and the seasons. Several of the metaphors occur in more than one section. In section one (3:1 – 5:20), the angel responds to Ezra's queries about the end of the age by referring to the increase of evil. Increasing evil is likened by Uriel to seeds sown which will produce a crop to be reaped when the field is full (4:26-32). Uriel tells Ezra, 'the evil about which you ask me has been sown, but the harvest of it has not yet come' (4:28), reassuring him that judgment will take place. In the second vision, the creation is depicted as a woman who gives birth to several children; as the younger children were smaller and weaker than former children, so it is with humanity, which gradually grows weaker and smaller (5:50-55). This is put explicitly in the seventh section; 'the weaker the world becomes through old age, the more shall evils be increased upon its inhabitants' (14:17).⁸⁰ The various metaphors for the end of the age in 1 Enoch depict deterioration as the end draws near. Sin will increase and humans will become more depraved.

⁷⁸ For a discussion of treatments of inconsistency in previous studies of 4 Ezra, see Stone, "On Reading," 66-68.

⁷⁹ Part of why Uriel does not give precise details is because the book is set in the fourth century BCE, but written for readers at the turn of the first century CE, who would recognise that the metaphors apply to them.

⁸⁰ See also 14:10, 'the age has lost its youth, and the times begin to grow old.'

As well as using images for the end of the age, 4 Ezra sketches a number of ‘signs of the end,’ which list events to take place before redemption occurs. Lists of these signs are found in each of the first three sections, in which Uriel describes phenomena that will occur before God’s redemption (5:1-13; 6:17-24; 9:1-13). Each of the catalogues of signs includes descriptions of chaos, abnormal natural occurrences, and war. Thus, 4 Ezra 5:1-13 poetically describes cosmic wonders (5:4), and also tells of women giving birth to monsters (5:8) and the mingling of salt and fresh water (5:9b). Similar lists of messianic woes are found in apocalyptic literature other than 4 Ezra, and depict the creation reverting back to chaos.⁸¹ The metaphorical and imaginative language of these signs makes it difficult to draw a clear connection with the author’s own time. The signs are deliberately open-ended, and offer possibilities for reinterpretation in each generation. Nevertheless, their inclusion in 4 Ezra suggests that readers were encouraged to identify such signs in their own time.

Sections five (4 Ezra 11:1 – 12:51) and six (13:1-58) of 4 Ezra relate to the Roman Empire and clearly reveal that the author of 4 Ezra believed that the end was imminent.⁸² The arrogance of the eagle leads the lion to declare, ‘The Most High has looked at his times, now they have ended, and his ages have reached completion’ (11:44). The lion (messiah) reproves and destroys the eagle (the Roman Empire) (11:31-33), preparing for God’s eschatological era. The Man from the Sea similarly conquers the nations that gather against him (13: 8-11). Both the Eagle Vision and the Vision of the Man from the Sea reveal that the kingdom of God will come following the destruction of Rome.

In light of these texts, it is surprising that Esler claims that the author of 4 Ezra expected the end in a distant future.⁸³ He claims that the imagery for the end does not necessarily connote a *near* end, and points to the long time-scale implied in 4 Ezra 14:10-12, 49.⁸⁴ Esler does not, however, take seriously enough the indications in the Eagle Vision that the destruction of Rome is a prelude to the eschatological era. The

⁸¹ 1 Enoch 80:2-4; 99:4-8; 2 Apoc. Bar. 25 – 27; Matt 24:6-29. See Allison, *End of the Ages*, 5-25; Stone, *4 Ezra*, 110.

⁸² See below for a discussion of judgment within these two visions.

⁸³ Esler, “Social Function,” 114-117.

⁸⁴ Esler argues, ‘it is apparent that even a cursory comparison of the time scale in the last vision with its dramatic date would not leave an original reader with any expectation that the end was imminent,’ Esler, “Social Function,” 117.

calculation of the figures presented in chapter 14 is a difficult matter,⁸⁵ but even if they do refer to a distant period, their reference is to the final, post-resurrection consummation, which will follow the destruction of Rome and the messianic kingdom. In the meantime, the author of 4 Ezra looks forward to the overthrow of Rome and the *beginning* of the eschatological period. It seems clear throughout the work that 4 Ezra depicts different stages and periods of judgment.

While the earlier sections of 4 Ezra briefly alluded to the eschatological judgment (4:32; 5:42-43), the third section of 4 Ezra provides two lengthy passages dealing with future judgment, 7:26-44 and 7:78-99. Both of the passages are placed in the mouth of Uriel as responses to Ezra's agonising questions over the fate of Israel and humanity.

In 4 Ezra 7:26-44, Uriel assures Ezra that the promised signs of the end will come to pass, including the appearance of the New Jerusalem (7:26).⁸⁶ The author also makes brief mention of a messianic period, which remains for 400 years (7:27-28).⁸⁷ Redemption takes place before the messianic period, and seems unconnected to the messiah.⁸⁸ After four hundred years, the messiah and all people die.⁸⁹ Following an interim period of primeval silence (7:30-31), resurrection takes place (7:32). The Lord takes his seat of judgment and distinguishes between the righteous and unrighteous (7:33-44).⁹⁰ The unrighteous are sent into a pit of torment, while the righteous are granted a place of rest. This judgment scene, then, takes place in the distant period, following the messianic period and the silence and recreation of the world. It is the *final* judgment. Although the text does not delve into it, a form of judgment seemingly takes place before the messiah's kingdom, connected to the deliverance of Israel (7:27). The temporal locale of judgment – in the distant future

⁸⁵ Stone, *4 Ezra*, 421.

⁸⁶ For the 'unseen city', see also 10:27, 44; 13:36 (cf., Isa 52:1; 54; Ezek 40-48); Stone, *4 Ezra*, 213-214. This verse also alludes to the signs previously listed (5:1-13; 6:17-24).

⁸⁷ For the messiah in this section, see chap. 4.

⁸⁸ Thus, redemption/deliverance is briefly mentioned in vs.27, and only in vs. 28 is the messiah revealed.

⁸⁹ The death of the messiah is not found in other sources, though cf., *2 Apoc. Bar.* 30:1; Stone, *4 Ezra*, 216-217.

⁹⁰ A reference to the 'nations' occurs in 7:37. Stone notes that the distinction between the righteous and unrighteous is primary, Stone, *4 Ezra*, 222. In light of the denunciation of foreign rulers in the Eagle Vision and the Man from the Sea, the 'righteous' and 'unrighteous' probably includes some 'nationalistic' nuances.

and after the messianic period – makes the judgment depicted in this text less relevant for our purposes.

4 Ezra 7:78-99 is a self-contained unit which presents a different aspect of judgment. While 7:26-44 deals with the final judgment of the resurrected, this passage concerns post-mortem judgment of the spirits of the dead.⁹¹ The spirits of the unrighteous wander in unholy places, and the author details seven reasons for their torment during this period.⁹² One of their seven ways of torment is their awareness of their future suffering in the final judgment (7:84, 87). In contrast to the seven ways of torment, the text also lists seven orders of the righteous, including their joyful expectation of the future world. Thus, although the judgment of the spirits of the dead differs from the previous scenario, it does not rule out a post-resurrection judgment, and indeed expect it. Because this judgment scene deals with the judgment of spirits after death, it is less relevant for the topic of public judgment expected in many apocalypses.

In the twelfth section of 4 Ezra, the famous Eagle Vision (4 Ezra 11:1 – 12:51), judgment takes place against Rome. The previous judgment scenes examined dealt with the distant future and the judgment of the souls of death, but the Eagle Vision depicts judgment upon the earth and within history (although also involving transcendent elements). Within this judgment scene, the messiah, depicted as a lion, acts as a judge on behalf of God. Rome is symbolised by a many winged and multi-headed Eagle (4 Ezra 11). Although identifying the symbolism of the Eagle in this section is difficult,⁹³ its three ‘heads’ (11:25-32; 12:22-27) are most likely symbols of the Flavian emperors Vespasian, Titus, and Domitian.⁹⁴ The author depicts the time of Domitian as representing the final period of the evil Empire’s rule, immediately preceding its judgment. Drawing the four beasts motif from Daniel,⁹⁵ the eagle is depicted as the fourth beast, whose sins surpass all others (11:40-43).

⁹¹ ‘The passage is unique in ancient Jewish literature for its detailed description of the intermediate state of the souls of the righteous and the wicked.’ Stone, *4 Ezra*, 238.

⁹² The figure ‘seven’ is probably also related to the notion of seven divisions of heaven. See Stone, *4 Ezra*, 238.

⁹³ Myers notes, ‘It is always wise not to attempt a too specific identification of apocalyptic figures in the absence of other compelling evidence that warrants it,’ Myers, *I and II Esdras*, 301.

⁹⁴ Stone, *4 Ezra*, 9-11.

⁹⁵ Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature*, 292.

The eagle, 'held sway over the world with much terror, and over all the earth with grievous oppression' (11:40).

4 Ezra clearly implicates Rome in the sins of the end time. The sins of the Eagle include the oppression of Israel and the earth (11:40, 42). The judgment itself involves the denouncement of Roman wickedness (11:28-46; 12:32) and the destruction of the Empire (11:45-46; 12:33). The depiction of Rome as a multi-headed eagle closes with the warning;

you will surely disappear, you eagle, and your terrifying wings, and your most evil little wings, and your malicious heads, and your most evil talons, and your whole worthless body, so that the whole earth, freed from your violence, may be refreshed and relieved, and hope for the judgment and mercy of him who made it (11:45).

Like the Eagle Vision, the vision of the Man from the Sea depicts God's judgment of earthly nations through a redeemer. The vision probably draws on a different tradition than the Eagle Vision,⁹⁶ but has a similar message. In this case, however, judgment against Rome is extended to judgment against the nations. The text depicts foreign armies gathering to fight against the man from the sea (13:8).⁹⁷ When they approach to fight, the man from the sea destroys them with 'fire', though without using a weapon of war (13:9-11). In the interpretation of the vision, the multitudes who gather against the man from the sea represent the nations who come to conquer the 'Son'. The Son reproaches them and destroys them with the law (13:33-38). Judgment here clearly entails the end of foreign nations, even if the end is through conversion rather than by military means.

The diversity of judgment scenes within 4 Ezra shows that the author made use of sources, but his skilful adaptation of the sources makes it wrong to leap too quickly to the charge of contradictions. Rather, the author presented a series of tableaux relating to different parts of the eschatological sequence. While 4 Ezra 7:78-99 refers to post-mortem judgment, and 7:26-44 describes final (post-messiah) judgment, the two visions in sections five and six of 4 Ezra relate to God's judgment of nations through an eschatological figure. These two scenes of judgment show the political dimensions of God's condemnation of humanity. 4 Ezra looks forward to this future

⁹⁶ For literary questions raised by the text, see Stone, *4 Ezra*, 396-397.

⁹⁷ The depiction of the gathering armies against Jerusalem draws from OT texts, such as Deut 28:49; Ps 2:1-2; Joel 2:1-10; Ezek 38-39; Stone, *4 Ezra*, 385.

judgment, and reveal that earthly kingdoms are transient and bound to disappear with God's kingdom. Rome is included in this critique. As Rowland puts it, 'The all-powerful might of Rome, which seems an insuperable obstacle to the fulfilment of God's promises, is shown to be only a temporary phenomenon on the stage of world-history.'⁹⁸

The judgment of God in response to a corrupt present, and specifically corrupt rulers, is a recurring theme in the apocalypses. Although a righteous remnant remains, sin and corruption take place in the earth, requiring God's imminent judgment. The early apocalypses connected judgment to a specific persecution of the righteous community, with judgment on those who persecuted the righteous. This shows that the origins of this theme lay in religio-political persecution of the Jewish community. In later works, the judgment becomes universalised, but in all traditions, rulers would be called to account for their sins. Judgment was also presented as imminent, and so a challenge and threat to the current world order. The imminence of judgment was often emphasised in the frequent apocalyptic claim to have been written long ago but sealed until the last days (Dan 12:9; 4 Ezra 14:46). By this device, readers are encouraged to think of themselves as living in the times of the end.

Apocalyptic writings do not affirm unequivocally that all rulers at every period of time are evil, but only that rulers at the end-time are characteristically corrupt. This affirmation served a variety of functions, frequently helping the righteous cope with the dissonance between their faith in God and the reality of suffering.⁹⁹ The dualistic conception of eschatology implied that the present was fundamentally faulty and that change was required. Such an assessment was political insofar as it encouraged ideological, and potentially social, dissatisfaction with the present situation.

God's Judgment and Eschatological Wrath in Romans

Those who have studied judgment in Paul have often focused on how Paul relates it to community life.¹⁰⁰ These interpreters rightly point out that judgment in Paul's letters often functions to encourage believers to live faithfully, or to mark out the

⁹⁸ Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 170.

⁹⁹ For the different functions of the judgment motif throughout Judaism, see Kuck, *Judgment and Community Conflict*, 53-68.

¹⁰⁰ E.g., Kuck, *Judgment and Community Conflict*; Roetzel, *Judgment in the Community*.

boundaries of the community. This community orientation of the judgment theme, and the reconfiguration of an apocalyptic perspective in the light of Christ, means that judgment is rarely focused on rulers as objects of God's condemnation.¹⁰¹ Has Paul 'spiritualised' judgment, and so dropped the political dimensions of apocalyptic? Has his increasingly realised eschatology led him to minimise the importance of God's coming judgment?¹⁰²

Paul's depiction of judgment assumed the eschatological story-line of apocalyptic: a time of tribulation or suffering is followed by God's judgment upon sinners and the redemption of his people.¹⁰³ In Romans, Paul also draws upon this narrative, depicting the present as corrupt (Rom 1:18-3:20), assuring readers of a future judgment (Rom 2:17; 14:10-12), and announcing God's redemption (Rom 3:21-26). Like many of the later apocalypses (*1 Enoch* 22; *4 Ezra* 7:32-37), for Paul all of humanity will be judged (Rom 14:7-12; 1 Thess 5:1-11; 1 Cor 15:20-28).

By sharing the eschatological narrative of apocalyptic, Paul's gospel retained the political implications of judgment. In light of the Christ-event, however, Paul shifted the focus of judgment from nations and rulers to the extent and ubiquity of present sin for all societies, and to future judgment on those in sin. To the extent that Paul shared the narrative of disjunctive eschatology, however, a political dimension remained. Even if less overt than in the apocalypses, the scope of Paul's view of judgment included the political and social orders of the world. Paul does not, like several later apocalypses, 'personalise' judgment and restrict it to a post-mortem realm. Rather, Paul maintains that the 'day of the Lord' would be a public, future event (Rom 2:16; 1 Cor 4:5; 1 Thess 5:1-5).

¹⁰¹ Significant exceptions exist; 1 Thess 5:3 speaks of the 'sudden destruction' connected with the coming of the Lord which comes upon those who proclaim 'peace and security' (a Roman imperial slogan); 1 Cor 2:6-8 identifies the rulers of this age with those who have crucified Jesus, which suggests some connection to the earthly rulers (Jewish and gentile); these rulers are 'doomed to perish'. See 2 Thess 1:6-9 for a description of God's vengeful judgment on unbelievers, although debates continue over whether 2 Thess is authentically Pauline.

¹⁰² For the move towards 'realised eschatology' in Paul, see Porter, "Apocalyptic Conceptions," 183-204; Dodd, "The Mind of Paul: II", 83-128. Baumgarten argues that the 'cosmological' features of Paul's gospel are relativised by his anthropological perspective; Baumgarten, *Paulus und die Apokalypstik*, 232-236, 240-243.

¹⁰³ For the sin of the present, cf., Rom 1:18-3:20; Gal 1:4; For future judgment, cf., Rom 2:17; 1 Cor 3:13; 6:2; Phil 3:19-21).

Paul depicts the context of judgment in Romans 1:18 – 3:20, where he emphasises the sinful present. The corruption of the present is not simply a prerequisite for judgment, but part of the judgment itself. Paul's view of judgment in the present acts as a backdrop for his argument that God has now acted to fulfil his righteousness in the Christ event.¹⁰⁴ Paul argues that all are under sin, going even further than the apocalypses in leaving no room for a 'righteous remnant', other than those found 'in Christ'. The universality of sin means that both Jewish and gentile communities are accountable to God. Although Paul's emphasis is on the surprising inclusion of Jews under God's wrath, his depiction of pagans under sin clearly includes nations and rulers, as well as individuals, within its purview. The 'political' world is also under sin.

The eschatological judgment of the present takes on apocalyptic and cosmic proportions in Paul's discussion of sin, flesh, and the law. Paul's explication of their cosmic implications occurs in Romans 5 – 8. Sin and flesh become key protagonists in a cosmic drama, temporal (eschatological) and existential powers which control human destiny. The seriousness of Paul's perspective is indicated by his view on the law. The law is 'holy and just and good' (7:12)¹⁰⁵ but has been usurped by the cosmic powers of this age and used for evil. Although sin and flesh take the place of the national and angelic enemies of the apocalypses, their cosmic characteristics mean that political dimensions remain. Sin enslaves communities, and not just individuals; the 'works of the flesh' threaten the community which the Spirit creates. Although this is not 'nationalistic' in the same way as the apocalypses, it is political insofar as it places the sphere of sin and the flesh in human communities as well as in the human heart. Human communities outside of Christ, whether ethnic, social, or political, are controlled by cosmic powers in the service of death.

As well as the ubiquitous judgment of the present in Romans (assessment as well as condemnation), future judgment remains an imminent reality (Rom 2:6-8, 16; Rom 13:12; 14:10). The nature of the judgment is not described in any great detail, but the terms and phrases Paul uses imply the overturning of the present in favour of a future created by God.

¹⁰⁴ I will return to this passage shortly for further discussion.

¹⁰⁵ Paul speaks in 7:12 of the 'commandment' ('ἐντολή') found in the law which confronts him, but by extension this applies to the law.

The Eschatological Corruption of the Present

Apocalyptic visionaries connected the increasing sins of humanity with moral, social, and cosmic turmoil (*1 Enoch* 1:6; 95:5-7; *Jub.* 23:11-12; *T. Levi* 4:1). Political disorder was a further aspect of present sin, whereby foreign rulers had usurped God's right (whether solely or through his representatives) to rule over his people (*Dan* 7; *1 Enoch* 62:1-12). In Romans 1:18 – 3:20, Paul associates moral and social disorder with the judgment of God. The function of this passage is primarily to demonstrate that all of humanity is under the power of sin (3:9),¹⁰⁶ and so liable for judgment.¹⁰⁷

Although Paul does not single out the political realm for indictment in Romans 1:18 – 3:20, his description of sins applies as much to empires as to individuals. Paul focuses on ethnic communities, but the ubiquity of sin demands the inclusion of the political realm within its power. More fundamentally, Paul's appeal to the eschatological narrative of apocalyptic implies that the rulers of the world were also part of the sinful present. Paul does not write *specifically* about the political realm because his focus is on the judgment of God as a 'levelling' force, revealing that the Jewish community was under sin as much as gentile society. The nationalistic triumphalism of the apocalyptic condemnation of foreign rulers is replaced by the recognition that Jews as well as gentiles were subject to the power of sin.¹⁰⁸

Romans 1:18 – 3:20 is a thematic unit. Whereas Romans 1:16-17 announces the 'new event' of the gospel, a theme picked up in 3:21-26, Romans 1:18 – 3:20 explains the context in which the revelation of God takes place.¹⁰⁹ God's

¹⁰⁶ Within this text, however, Paul also alludes to a group of people who do manage to 'fulfil' God's will, hinting at his later development of this theme (see our discussion below on 2:12-16, 25-29).

¹⁰⁷ See below. Although other features are present in the text, most interpreters recognise that, broadly speaking, this is the function of Rom 1:18 – 3:20. See Cranfield, *Romans I*, 104-199; Dunn, *Romans I-8*, 51-160; Käsemann, *Romans*, 33-90; Nygren, *Romans*, 97-143. Longenecker, *Eschatology and the Covenant*, 172-202. Wright argues that this is not Paul's sole concern here, but admits it is still a primary feature of the passage; N. T. Wright, "The Law in Romans 2," in *Paul and the Mosaic Law: The Third Durham-Tübingen Symposium on Earliest Christianity and Judaism* (Durham, September, 1994), James D. G. Dunn, 131-150 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001), 131-132. For a substantial critique of this reading of Romans 1:18-3:20, and a radical reinterpretation, see Stowers, *Rereading of Romans*, 83-193 (comments on this below).

¹⁰⁸ For a discussion of the social function of the law in Judaism, see Dunn, *Romans I-8*, lxiii-lxxii.

¹⁰⁹ The continuation of the argument in 3:21 from 1:17 indicates that 1:18-3:20 as a whole relates to Paul's announcement that God's wrath is revealed. In 3:21, Paul adds to 1:17 the notion that the righteousness of God is disclosed *apart from the law* (although 'testified' to by the law and the

righteousness is ‘now’ revealed in light of the ‘wrath of God’ present over humanity.¹¹⁰

The announcement that God’s wrath is revealed over humanity begins Paul’s critique (Rom 1:18). Paul connects this wrath to the depravity of pagan life in Romans 1:19-32, and to the Jewish community in 2:1 – 3:9. Romans 3:9-20 summarises the theme of the passage: God has placed all under sin and so all will be liable for judgment. Within the structure of Romans as a whole, Paul’s denunciation of humanity creates a foil for his presentation of Christ as God’s solution to human sin. Romans 1:18 – 3:20, however, also includes hints of Paul’s later argument, alluding to God’s creative activity among believing gentiles (2:12-16, 25-29).¹¹¹

Paul’s critique in Romans 1:18 – 3:20 is not based on a moral or ethical description of gentiles or Jews, but on an apocalyptic denunciation of the pagan world *and the Jewish world* which unveils the consequences of idolatry and injustice.¹¹² If the apocalyptic perspective is missed, then the text becomes an unconvincing diatribe against gentile and Jewish communities. Paul’s description of pagan and Jewish societies places them on an eschatological time-line. Both Jews and gentiles are united in the sin of the end-time.

The opening of Paul’s discussion introduces its general theme, and also the apocalyptic framework of the critique (Rom 1:18);

The wrath of God (ὀργὴ θεοῦ) is being revealed (ἀποκαλύπτεται) from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of those who by their wickedness suppress the truth

The connection between ‘wrath’ and ‘revelation’ indicates that Paul draws on an apocalyptic theme. Both these notions, although found in the Hebrew Bible, are developed particularly by the apocalyptic writers. Revelation was a crucial element of Jewish apocalyptic, as the visionaries relied on God for knowledge from above. The ‘wrath’ (ὀργὴ) of God, like God’s righteousness in the preceding verse (1:17),

prophets). This hints that part of Paul’s concern in 1:18-3:20 was to show that possession of the law does not guarantee inclusion in God’s new covenant people.

¹¹⁰ Note the parallel between 1:17 (the righteousness of God is revealed) and 1:18 (the wrath of God is revealed).

¹¹¹ See below.

¹¹² Nygren, *Romans*, 112-113.

is also found in apocalyptic contexts (Dan 7:28f; *1 Enoch* 91:7).¹¹³ Whereas apocalyptic writers typically depict salvation and wrath as future events, Paul indicates a present disclosure of both within the present. The ‘revelation’ of God’s wrath is not simply its disclosure but its manifestation. As Williams notes, ‘as used here, the verb describes a becoming operative and effective, a manifestation in activity’¹¹⁴

Paul supports his statement that God’s wrath is ‘revealed’ from heaven with a depiction of increasing sins among the gentiles (1:18-32), and the evidence from Jewish disobedience to the covenant (2:1-3:20). An increase of sins occurs in the eschatological time.¹¹⁵ Cranfield argues that God’s wrath is revealed not as an eschatological event, but in the gospel.¹¹⁶ The gospel, however, was itself an eschatological event. The Christ-event is interpreted within, as well as shaping, an apocalyptic perspective. God’s wrath is not simply an ‘automatic’ response to a disordered creation,¹¹⁷ but an eschatological activity. As Stuhlmacher puts it, ‘The end events are near at hand, and for those who believe, to whom Paul is writing, the anticipatory signs and criteria of judgment are already clearly evident and explicable from the perspective of the gospel.’¹¹⁸

In Romans 1:18-32, Paul connects unrighteousness in the gentile world with the suppression of the knowledge of God and its replacement by idolatry and injustice (1:18-23). A three-fold refrain occurs, explaining that God has ‘given over’ humanity (‘παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς’) to their sins (1:24, 26, 28). God’s refusal to act against humans, and instead to allow them to deteriorate further into their sins, constitutes the present judgment. This leads to the further deterioration of human behaviour and society, including idolatry, ‘unnatural’ sexuality, and antisocial and

¹¹³ As Käsemann notes, this concept, ‘does not derive from Greek tradition but from OT-Jewish apocalyptic,’ Käsemann, *Romans*, 37.

¹¹⁴ Williams, “‘Righteousness of God’ in Romans,” 256. Although Williams is speaking specifically of Rom 1:17, the same use is found here.

¹¹⁵ So Barrett (*Romans*, 33-34), who argues from the force of the ‘γὰρ’ in 1:18.

¹¹⁶ Cranfield, *Rom I*, 106-111.

¹¹⁷ Wis. 14:31, which also pictures God giving people over to their sin, has misled interpreters to believe that Paul’s depiction of God’s ‘wrath’ here is not eschatological, but the normal ‘mechanics’ of God’s universe. See Dodd, *Romans*, 26-29; Adams argues that, ‘Paul draws a picture of a morally ordered universe maintained by a universal natural law and an in-built retributive process which comes into play when the moral order is contravened,’ Adams, *Constructing the World*, 163.

¹¹⁸ Stuhlmacher, *Romans*, 36.

sinful behaviour. There is an implicit increase of sins in 1:18-31, a suggestion that God had allowed humanity to deteriorate further into sin. This is emphasised in the final catalogue of heinous sins, listed following the final refrain 'God gave them up' (1:28-32). The climactic indictment is that gentiles not only participated in sin, but encouraged it in others.

Throughout the text, Paul indicates that God gives sinners their due: in not glorifying God (1:21), gentiles glorify images of humans and animals (1:22-23); in not acknowledging God ('ἔδοκίμασαν τὸν θεὸν ἔχειν ἐν ἐπιγνώσει'), they are given over to a 'debased mind' ('ἀδόκιμον νοῦν') (1:28). As Bassler notes, 'Paul indicates that God not only exacts retribution for sins, but does so in accordance with the misdeeds, underscoring the appropriateness and justice of the divine response.'¹¹⁹

Paul explains the basis for the deterioration of pagan culture in Romans 1:18-23. In rejecting the knowledge of God, gentiles invited God's judgment. Gentiles perceive that God exists from the world around them, but suppress this knowledge.¹²⁰ The consequence of this is idolatry, whereby humans, 'exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling a mortal human being or birds or four-footed animals or reptiles.' (1:23). Paul's reference to idolatry draws on Jewish tradition (Ps 105:20, LXX), and has particularly strong echoes in the book of Wisdom.¹²¹ Paul illustrates the idolatry of pagan society by listing images used by pagans to represent gods. Various 'gentile' cultures worshipped animals (or gods in animal form), such as Egypt. The worship of gods in human form was also very common. The images are illustrative of the point: gentiles foolishly replaced the true God for idols.

Having established that the basis of gentile sin is idolatry, Paul draws attention to its consequences (Rom 1:24-31). God has given gentiles, 'in the lust of their hearts to

¹¹⁹ Jouette M. Bassler, "Divine Impartiality in Paul's Letter to the Romans," *NovT* 26 (1984), 48.

¹²⁰ For the 'natural theology' perspective, see Adams, *Constructing the World*, 158-164. Even if the world is a medium of revelation, however, sin has prevented gentiles from 'reading the signs', as Adams acknowledges.

¹²¹ Wis. 11:15; 12:24; 13:10. For a comparison between the texts in Wisdom and in Romans 1, see W. Sanday and A. C. Headlam, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 4th ed., ICC, (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1900), 51-52. The presence of Wisdom motifs does not, however, minimise its apocalyptic content. Johnson has shown that apocalyptic and wisdom motifs could and did easily exist together in many Jewish texts together, not least in Romans; Johnson, *Apocalyptic and Wisdom Traditions*. For the connection of apocalyptic and Wisdom traditions in Rom 9 – 11, see esp. pp. 124-139. Further, the Wisdom of Solomon itself shares several similarities with apocalyptic eschatology (cf., 4:20 – 5:2; 4:6...). See Kuck, *Judgment and Community*, 75-77.

impurity, to the dishonouring of their bodies among themselves' (Rom 1:24). Sexual immorality is a result of suppressing the knowledge of God (Rom 1:25). Following the refrain (1:26a), Paul presents male and female homosexuality as specific examples of gentile impurity (Rom 1:26-27).

Romans 1:18-32 has received an enormous amount of exegetical attention, not least because Paul's depiction of homosexual behaviour as 'unnatural' has hermeneutical and pastoral implications for those who accept his words as scriptural.¹²² Many interpreters have sought to soften the possible hermeneutical consequences of Paul's words by arguing that he was not referring to homosexual behaviour, but instead to pederasty,¹²³ or to heterosexuals who become homosexuals.¹²⁴ Others argue that Paul was condemning homosexuality (both male and female), and so his words should be taken seriously in the contemporary debate. Most helpful are those interpreters who recognise that Paul is addressing homosexual behaviour, but who also note the historical and cultural distance between Paul's words and the contemporary situation.¹²⁵ I want to argue here that, (a) Paul condemned homosexual behaviour, (b) Paul's condemnation of homosexual behaviour was linked to a hierarchical and gendered social code taken for granted in antiquity, and, (c) Paul's condemnation of homosexual behaviour appealed to the narrative of apocalyptic eschatology.

The best reading of Romans 1:26-27 is that Paul is referring to homosexual relationships. Although some interpreters have questioned this interpretation, it is supported by the language of desire in the text, the parallel between 'male

¹²² For treatments of this text, see, as well as the commentaries, John Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality: Gay People in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 107-113; L. William Countryman, *Dirt, Greed and Sex: Sexual Ethics in the New Testament and their Implications for Today* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 109-123; Richard H. Hays, "Relations Natural and Unnatural: A Response to John Boswell's Exegesis of Romans 1," *JRE* 14, 1 (1986), 184-215; Bernadette J. Brooken, *Love Between Women: Early Christian Responses to Female Homoeroticism* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 189-382.

¹²³ Robin Scroggs, *The New Testament and Homosexuality: Contextual Background for Contemporary Debate* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 109-118.

¹²⁴ Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality*, 107-113.

¹²⁵ I am aware of the problems with terms such as 'homosexuality' (a nineteenth century coinage), and recognise that other interpreters prefer different terms ('gay', 'same-sex eroticism'). Recognising the problems of many of the terms, I have chosen to use the phrase 'homosexual behaviour', and where appropriate 'heterosexual behaviour'. The focus on behaviour rather than orientation is more congruent with the first century context.

exchanging male' and 'female exchanging female', and the use of the expression 'unnatural' ('παρὰ φύσιν') in Paul's description.

Paul describes the behaviour in question as emerging from 'dishonourable desires' ('πάθη ἀτιμίας') (1:26), to which God has given the godless gentiles. Paul applies this description to both the female and male activities. The 'desires' referred to are specified in more detail in 1:27, where Paul refers to men 'burning in passion' ('ἐξεκαύθησαν ἐν τῇ ὀρέξει') for one another. The language of desire used throughout these verses fits well within the discourse of sexuality. The negative connotations associated with the desires reflect the ancient suspicion of desire *qua* desire,¹²⁶ but the main point here is that the desires in question are directed illegitimately – women desire women, men desire men. The discourse of desire used throughout these verses also makes it unlikely that Paul is referring to 'heterosexuals' acting as 'homosexuals'.¹²⁷ Rather, the desire itself reflects behaviour that is contrary to God's will.

The homosexual nature of the behaviour is also reflected in the parallel between 1:26 and 1:27. In both verses, humans – female and male – 'exchange' what is natural for what is unnatural ('παρὰ φύσιν'). In vs. 27, the 'natural' for men is defined as the 'χρησιν τῆς θηλείας,' which instead they abandon. The lack of a masculine noun following 'φυσικὴν χρῆσιν' in vs. 26 reflects that women were regarded as passive participants in the sexual act, and so not actively 'using' the male. The expressions 'natural' ('φυσικὴν') and 'unnatural' ('παρὰ φύσιν') were widely used in antiquity for sexual behaviour. While 'natural' in this context typically referred to male-female intercourse, 'unnatural' could embody a number of actions, and included homosexual behaviour. Homosexual behaviour, especially between women, was 'παρὰ φύσιν', a use which finds numerous parallels in both Jewish and gentile literature.¹²⁸ The reference in 1:26-27 to male *and* female homosexual behaviour rules out the possibility that Paul is referring to pederasty, which was a male practice, not a female one.

¹²⁶ Stowers, *Rereading of Romans*, 46-52; Brooten, *Love Between Women*, 237-238.

¹²⁷ Contra Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality*, 107-113

¹²⁸ Among Hellenistic Jews, note Jos., *Apion*, 2.273; Philo, *Spec. Leg.*, 3.37-42; cf., Hays, "Relations Natural and Unnatural," 191-195; Brooten, *Love Between Women*, 244-253.

Although Paul refers to both male and female forms of homosexual behaviour, his focus is on the male form (as indicated by the length with which he treats it). Paul's comment that men who engage in 'shameful acts' with one another receive their due recompense refers most likely to homosexual behaviour itself as the punishment for abandoning God and worshipping idols.¹²⁹ This fits with the flow of the argument in which sin is the punishment for idolatry (Rom 1:24, 26, 28).

Paul's language echoes other texts throughout the Greco-Roman world which deal with sexuality. More broadly, the similarity in language betrays assumptions shared by most ancient males. Paul's condemnation of homosexual behaviour was related fundamentally to social codes of gender and sexuality operative in the ancient world.¹³⁰ Within that context, the male was seen as the active (and dominant) partner in a sexual relationship, whereas the female was viewed as the passive partner (and so submissive) during intercourse.¹³¹ Sexual roles mirrored social roles. The male should always be 'active' in sexual relationships because the male as the 'active' agent was also a warrior, a ruler, and a *man*. The female, the passive partner in the relationship, was also the passive agent in life, intended to exercise her role in the home. Paul condemns homosexuality as 'unnatural' because it involved a subversion of this 'natural' code, with a male assuming a 'passive' role in male homosexuality and a woman (or both women) assuming an active sexual role.¹³²

Although the sexual-social code meant a widespread condemnation of homosexuality throughout the ancient world, there were situations in which Greeks and Romans (but not Jews) accepted its legitimacy. The best-known instance of this was the Greek mentor relationship, which became a model for later Romans. Within this relationship, older men would supervise the transition from youth to adulthood of

¹²⁹ Cranfield, *Romans I*, 126-127.

¹³⁰ See, especially, Brooten, *Love Between Women*, 234-237, 272-280.

¹³¹ 'To be active was to be male, whatever the sex of the compliant partner. To take one's pleasure was virile, to accept it servile - that was the whole story. Women were passive by definition,' Paul Veyne, "Homosexuality in Ancient Rome: Practice and Precept in Past and Present Times," in *Western Sexuality, Family, Sexuality and Social Relations in Past Times*, ed. Philippe Ariès and André Bèjin, 26-35 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd, 1985), 29-30.

¹³² On female homosexual behaviour, Brooten notes, 'Sexual relations between women confounded societal categories of gender that classify all females as passive, subordinate recipients of penetration. In this framework, all female-female sexual relations were inherently unnatural,' Brooten, *Love Between Women*, 241.

boys entering puberty.¹³³ This supervision typically included the sexual ‘use’ of the boy by the older mentor. Similarly, slaves, also in a situation of subservience to masters, could be used sexually. Such homosexual relationships were accepted because of the power difference between the individuals concerned. There was thus an ‘active’ and a ‘passive’ partner involved. It was assumed that the superior person would also assume the sexually active role in the sexual exchange. When roles were reversed, however, and the social superior became sexually ‘passive’ in the relationship, then wide-spread condemnation was the norm.¹³⁴ Although homosexual behaviour between males was accepted under certain conditions, female homosexual behaviour received wide-spread condemnation. Female homosexual behaviour violated the gendered discourse of society, because by engaging in sexual intimacy, at least one of the females took on an ‘active’ sexual role. By taking on ‘active’ roles, females subverted the connection between gender and power in society.¹³⁵

Ancient antipathy towards homosexual behaviour was not simply a product of private moral scruples, therefore, but part of the web of cultural meanings given to sexuality, gender and power. Homosexual behaviour was objectionable because it violated the clear gender and social roles taken for granted in antiquity. Although Jews and gentiles differed in certain interpretations of this code,¹³⁶ both cultures assumed a common understanding of male-female relationships. Thus, while Paul condemned homosexual behaviour, his grounds for condemnation assumed a sexual-social order distant from that which exists today.

Paul’s condemnation of homosexuality was also connected to his apocalyptic perspective. Within Romans 1:18-32, same-sex behaviour is related to the eschatological ‘wrath of God’, and used to illustrate the depravity to which gentile civilisation came. As well as this context, however, there are also texts within apocalyptic literature which viewed same-sex behaviour as part of the disordering of

¹³³ For pederasty in the ancient world, see Scroggs, *New Testament and Homosexuality*, 29-65.

¹³⁴ ‘the idea that a Roman citizen should be exploited in this way [taking the ‘passive’ role] evoked a particular horror among Romans who prided themselves on their control of the world around them’ Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality*, 74-75.

¹³⁵ Brooten, *Love Between Women*, 216.

¹³⁶ The Jews did not accept ‘active’ homosexual behaviour. The Levitical descriptions of homosexuality as an ‘abomination’ (Lev 18:22) made all homosexual behaviour ‘sinful,’ as well as ‘unclean.’ At least, this is how it homosexuality is seen in later Jewish tradition, e.g., Wis 14:26; *T. Levi* 17:11.

the world which takes place before the end (*T. Naph.* 3:2-4). Within the apocalyptic literature, 'unnatural' activity frequently reflected the disorder of society and the cosmos itself. *1 Enoch* 3 – 5, for instance, draws the reader's attention to the consistency of nature (in its seasons, its conformity to God's Law etc.) in order to contrast this with the unnatural departure of sinners from the commandments of the Lord (*1 Enoch* 5:4). The contrast between nature and unnatural (because unrighteous) behaviour justifies God's judgment of those who refuse to hear his call (*1 Enoch* 5:5-10). Paul draws attention to 'disordered' sexuality in order to indicate the disorder of the society around him,¹³⁷ but the connection between sexual disorder and social chaos also fits Paul's apocalyptic perspective. Paul's critique is not simply against 'personal' sins but against the society and culture within which those practices took place. Sexual depravity is indicative of a more fundamental social disorder.

In Romans 1:28-32, Paul includes a list of general sins to end his critique. The list of vices in 1:29-32, 'spring out in rapid succession as from Pandora's box',¹³⁸ as Käsemann colourfully puts it. Although they are grouped together stylistically rather than thematically,¹³⁹ and although the source of this list is debated, their function is to highlight the moral and social disorder caused by human idolatry. Paul does not emphasise any particular sin, but refers to generally unacceptable behaviour.¹⁴⁰ He combines relational sins ('envy', 'gossip') with more serious sins ('murder'!), indicating the multiple ways in which pagan society has broken down.

Several interpreters have pointed out that Paul's description throughout 1:18-32 alludes to the Adam narrative of Genesis 3.¹⁴¹ Within Jewish tradition, Adam became the example *par excellence* of one who refused to acknowledge the claims of God (*Wis.* 2:23-24; 4 *Ezra* 3:21, 26; 2 *Bar.* 23:4; 54.15). Despite the protest of Stowers

¹³⁷ For the way in which same-sex relationships threatened cultural values and social order in antiquity, see Stowers, *Rereading of Romans*, 94-97.

¹³⁸ Käsemann, *Romans*, 50.

¹³⁹ Cranfield, *Romans I*, 129.

¹⁴⁰ Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 75-76.

¹⁴¹ Morna D. Hooker, "Adam in Romans 1," *From Adam to Christ: Essays on Paul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 73-84; idem. "A further note on Romans 1," *From Adam to Christ: Essays on Paul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 85-87; Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 60-61, 72-73. Fitzmyer is unconvinced, *Romans*, 274.

that reading the Adam story in this way was a later development,¹⁴² Romans 5:12-21 shows that Paul viewed the Adam story as a fall narrative.¹⁴³ The order of Paul's description in Romans 1:18-32 also corresponds well to the story of Adam in Genesis 2 – 3. Adam knew of God's existence and power and could in no way deny hearing God's command to him. The suppression of the truth about God (1:18b) calls to mind Adam's own act of ignoring God's truth; in order to take the fruit and accept the challenge of the serpent, Adam suppressed the knowledge God had given him. And Adam's sin led to God's wrath, his expulsion from the garden and marked the beginning of a history of sin. Hooker also points out that idolatry, sexual immorality and wickedness, the three clusters to which God gives humanity over, reflect traditional aspects associated with the fall of man.¹⁴⁴ A number of words within Romans 1 are also connected with the Genesis narrative. The expansion of the Psalm reference in 1:23 probably derives from the Genesis story. Genesis 1:20-26 in particular contain much vocabulary which is drawn on within this text, including the names of the four types of 'creatures' to which people subordinate themselves.¹⁴⁵ Although the Adam narrative lies behind this text, Paul's main concern is to indict pagan society around him, which he does in typically Jewish fashion.

As we mentioned earlier, Paul's critique of gentile society within Romans 1:18-32, depicts the increase of gentile sins in apocalyptic terms. The reference to God 'handing over' unbelievers to their sins does not indicate a 'natural' process but God's own activity in 'handing over' all to disobedience. Paul draws on the apocalyptic story-line in which end-time was characterised by an increase of sins.

The sins described by Paul imply a critique of social, public, and political life, as well as of private piety. Considering the connection between passion, sex, and society in antiquity, it is wrong to separate the sins of 1:24-27 from the social vices of 1:28-32.¹⁴⁶ Paul critiques sexual practices because they reflect the disorder of all

¹⁴² Stowers, *Rereading of Romans*, 86-88. Stowers' alternative reading is that 1:18-32 is a 'fall narrative' depicting historic gentile decline, pp. 85-100. However, as well as found in 5:12-21, the 'Adam narrative' is culturally closer to Paul as a Jew. The hints of a 'fall narrative' identified by Stowers are less convincing.

¹⁴³ Paul also draws on the Wis, which refers to Adam's sin in 2:23-24.

¹⁴⁴ Hooker, "Adam in Romans 1," 79-80.

¹⁴⁵ Hooker, "Adam in Romans 1," 73-78.

¹⁴⁶ Contra Dodd, *Romans*, 26-29.

of creation. Disordered sexuality reflected a disordered society. The vice list in 1:28-30 is deliberately inclusive, including aspects which would threaten social and community life. Paul's critique naturally includes the political within its scope.

Following his description of gentiles under the wrath of God, Paul turns to the community of the Jews in Romans 2:1 – 3:9. Paul argues that the existence of sin within Israel shows that Israel has not fulfilled God's will for his holy community. Israel is in a state of sin and so subject, like the gentiles, to the judgment of God (2:1-11, 17-24). Paul also describes a community distinct from the Jews which is able to 'fulfil' the law, undermining Israel's privileged status as the covenant people of God (2:12-16, 25-29).

In Romans 2:1-11, Paul begins his critique against the Jewish community by utilising the diatribe form, criticising a figure who judges others but who does not recognise that God's judgment is over him. The diatribe form is indicated by the turn of address, the use of 'ἄνθρωπε' and the rhetorical questions of vss. 3-4.¹⁴⁷ The identity of the interlocutor in this text, however, is less certain. While many commentators argue that Paul is depicting a Jewish dialogue partner from Romans 2:1,¹⁴⁸ others argue that Paul does not address the Jew until 2:17.¹⁴⁹ The allusions to Jewish self-understanding in 2:1-11 make it likely that Paul has the Jewish community in mind.¹⁵⁰ Romans 2:2, for instance, echoes Jewish traditions emphasising knowledge of God's will (Dan 7:9-11; Zeph 1:14-2:5). Further, 2:1-11 forms a close parallel to 2:17-24, in which a Jewish interlocutor is in view.¹⁵¹ Paul criticizes his interlocutor for his hypocrisy and taking for granted his privileged status. The interlocutor is subject to the same divine standard as that which he preaches, and is not exempt from God's judgment. Although he claims to fulfil God's law, he clearly does not. Indeed, his 'hard and impenitent heart' already stores

¹⁴⁷ Stanley K. Stowers, *The Diatribe and Paul's Letter to the Romans*, SBLDS, William Baird (Chico, California: Scholars Press, 1981), 93-96.

¹⁴⁸ Cranfield, *Romans I*, 137-139; Käsemann, *Romans*, 53-54; Stuhlmacher, *Romans*, 38; Dunn, *Romans I-8*, 78-79, 89-93.

¹⁴⁹ Barrett, *Romans*, 42-43. Stowers argues that 2:1-16 deals with an 'imaginary gentile' and Paul only turns to the 'dialogue with the Jew' in 2:17; Stowers, *Rereading of Romans*, 127-129.

¹⁵⁰ Cranfield, *Romans I*, 137-138; Dunn, *Romans I-8*, 78-79.

¹⁵¹ Both passages are followed by a discussion of obeying the law without living as a Jew. Further, the description of those who judge what is wrong but do the same (2:1, 3) is close to that of those who boast in the law and yet break it (2:23).

up judgment. The reference to judgment by deeds (6-11) establishes God's impartiality.

Following a hint that eschatological obedience really takes place in gentile communities (2:12-16) (see below), Paul names the interlocutor explicitly as a Jew (2:17).¹⁵² Paul points out his hypocrisy; the Jew claims to be a teacher of the law, but does things which it prohibits. He sets himself up as a 'guide to the blind', a 'light to those in darkness', and a 'teacher of children',¹⁵³ but breaks the same law he proclaims (2:17-29). A typical protest against Paul's argument here is its inaccuracy. Most Jews were not thieves, adulterers, or temple robbers. Some interpreters suggest that Paul was exaggerating or using these terms metaphorically.¹⁵⁴ Stowers denies that the interlocutor represents the Jewish community, and argues that it depicts a pretentious Jewish teacher.¹⁵⁵ According to Stowers, this teacher imagines that gentiles will be transformed by following the law but is guilty of breaking the law. In view of the dissonance between the 'claims' of the interlocutor and his activities, and in view of the allusions to the self-understanding of the Jewish community as God's covenant people, it is best to read the passage as referring to the Jewish community as a whole.

Paul refers to the failure of Jews as a community to live by the law. His perspective, however, is not simply shaped by the Christ-event but draws on a Jewish 'plight-solution' pattern identified by Thielman.¹⁵⁶ Within this pattern, the Jewish community throughout its history proves itself incapable of following the law (a desperate plight). The same texts which express the failure of the community, however, also look forward to an eschatological era when God will enable the Jewish

¹⁵² Rom 2:17-24 identifies the figure in 2:1-11, as the similarities between the two texts show. Cf., Stuhlmacher, *Romans*, 49; Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 108.

¹⁵³ Paul's description alludes to Jewish texts which present the Jewish community in such terms, cf. Isa 42:7; *T. Levi* 14:4; 1 QS 3:13. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 112. Dunn notes, 'Paul begins by giving voice to the national pride of the "Jew",' *Romans 1-8*, 116.

¹⁵⁴ 'When theft, adultery, and sacrilege are strictly and rationally understood, there is not man who is not guilty of all three.' Barrett, *Romans*, 56-57. Cf., Cranfield, *Romans I*, 168-170.

¹⁵⁵ Stowers, *Rereading of Romans*, 143-153.

¹⁵⁶ Frank Thielman, *From Plight to Solution. A Jewish Framework for Understanding Paul's View of the Law in Galatians and Romans*, NovTSup, ed. C. K. Barrett et al (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1989), 28-45; Cf., also Wright, "Law in Romans 2," 139-143, who describes texts which indicate that Israel remains 'in exile'.

community to obey the law (the solution).¹⁵⁷ The pattern shows that some Jews were aware of a cycle of sin within their history and awaited God's redemption when they would be empowered to keep the law. In his critique of Jewish sin, then, Paul appeals to a tradition known within Judaism. Others would agree that the Jewish community had failed to live up to their covenant obligations.¹⁵⁸ Paul concludes from this that Jews as well as gentiles were liable to the judgment of God.

As well as referring to the communal unfaithfulness of Jews at the present time, Paul alludes to a community which is faithful to God's law, even though they are not part of the historic community of God. Romans 2:12-16 and 2:25-29 both refer to a class of people who are 'doers of the law'. The best reading of these texts is that Paul refers to Christian gentiles who are empowered eschatologically to fulfil the law.¹⁵⁹

Romans 2:12-16 establishes that God judges Jews and gentiles impartially.

Possession of the law is not as significant as obeying the law (2:13), as only the 'doers of the law' will be justified. Paul proceeds to explain that gentiles who 'do instinctively what the law requires' (2:14) will be judged on that basis, and perhaps receive salvation on the day of Christ (2:16). The text has been interpreted in a variety of ways. Some interpreters believe that Paul is appealing to a 'natural law' idea, on which basis gentiles can respond to the revelation they have received and be saved.¹⁶⁰ Others believe that Paul is allowing gentiles a hypothetical chance of salvation outside of the law (and outside of Christ), but undermines it within his broader argument.¹⁶¹ The best explanation, however, is that the gentiles who do what the law requires refers to Christian gentiles. This 'law written on the heart' alludes to eschatological promises that God would write his commandments on the hearts of his

¹⁵⁷ Cf., 1QH 1:21-32; 11:10-14; *I Enoch* 10:20-21; *Pss. Sol.* 17; *T. Dan* 5.

¹⁵⁸ See Wright, "Law in Romans 2," 139-143. Wright speaks of this state as being 'under exile'.

¹⁵⁹ Cranfield, *Romans I*, 155-163; 171-176; Wright, "Law in Romans 2," 131-150. In view of Thielman's identification of a 'plight-solution' pattern within Judaism, and his reference to the 'solution' involving eschatological power to fulfil God's will, it is surprising that he does not read these texts as referring to gentile Christians (but rather to a hypothetical possibility). He admits, however, that gentile Christians may be in the back of Paul's mind, *Plight to Solution*, 92-96.

¹⁶⁰ Dodd, *Romans*, 35-37.

¹⁶¹ Walters, *Ethnic Issues*, 72-75; Richard N. Longenecker, "The Focus of Romans: The Central Role of 5:1-8:39 in the Argument of the Letter," in *Romans and the People of God: Essays in Honor of Gordon D. Fee on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday*, ed. Sven K. Soderlund and N. T. Wright, 49-69 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999), 57.

people (Jer 21:33 [LXX 31:38]).¹⁶² 'Doing instinctively what the law requires' is related to the Spirit of Christ. Further, although some interpreters argue that Paul is assuming a 'nonChristian' view point here, Paul refers explicitly to judgment 'according to my gospel', and includes Jesus within the scenario.

In Romans 2:25-29, a text parallel to 2:12-16, Paul refers to 'circumcision of the heart', making an even clearer allusion to the eschatological people of God. Within the Jewish scriptures, 'circumcision of the heart' is associated with obedience to God (cf., Deut 10:16; Jer 4:4; 9:26). Wright argues that Paul appeals to Ezekiel 36:24-28, read as an eschatological text, in which God gives his people a new heart and a new spirit.¹⁶³ The 'true Jew' (i.e., the one who fulfils the law) is not necessarily circumcised, but obedience to God is 'spiritual' rather than 'fleshly'.

Paul's reference to Christian gentiles alludes to the later development of this theme in the letter (Rom 8:3-9; 13:8-10) and also shows that the law had a place for the eschatological community of God. Significantly, Paul also alludes to the development of a community of God distinct from ethnic boundaries. Paul's depiction of a gentile community of God which obeys the law but is not 'Jewish' is not simply a digression from his thesis that 'all are under sin'. Rather, Paul shows by the existence of an eschatological community that the Jewish community as a whole rests under God's judgment, because it has not recognised God's eschatological work within Christ. It also, however, hints at Paul's later development of 'eschatological obedience' through the letter (8:4; 13:10).

In Romans 3:1-8, Paul deals with the objections to his argument. Paul rejects the possible conclusion that the Jews have no advantage. The 'advantage' of Jews, however, is not that they remain God's people despite unfaithfulness, but that they are heir to God's oracles, to the law (3:2). Paul argues that God's faithfulness remains despite the faithlessness of Jews (3:5-7) and denies as absurd the suggestion that his reconfiguration of the law, gentiles, and eschatology leads to an antinomian conclusion (3:8; cf. 6:1).

Having critiqued both pagan and Jewish society, Paul ends Romans 1:18 – 3:20 with a catena of scriptural passages in support of his claim that, 'all, both Jews and

¹⁶² Cranfield, *Romans I*, 158-159.

¹⁶³ Wright, "Law in Romans 2," 132-133.

Greeks, are under the power of sin.’ (3:9b; 10-18). Romans 3:10-18 includes a series of general texts which, although drawn from the Hebrew Bible, express the apocalyptic perspective on human corruption. The passage begins with a quotation from Ecclesiastes 7:29, followed by several quotations from the Psalms (Pss 12:2-3; 5:10; 139:4; 9:28) and ends with a quotation of Isaiah 59:7-8 and Psalm 35:2. Although the Psalm quotations would typically be read as speaking generally about gentiles, Paul’s use of Ecclesiastes and Isaiah 59 shows that Jews also are under the indictment of scripture.¹⁶⁴ Paul turns the critique of sinners within the scripture against Israel herself.¹⁶⁵ Although this end text does not quote apocalyptic texts, its attitude to the scriptures parallel it. Paul, like the Qumran covenanters, treats scripture as relevant for the eschatological community. The scriptures are read through the prism of the Christ-event.

Stowers acknowledges that Paul has appropriated an apocalyptic perspective in Romans 3:10-18, but argues that this did not mean that Paul’s critique included the Jewish community. Even though apocalyptic literature framed its critique in universal terms, Stowers notes that it did not include the ‘righteous’ within it, and that its critique was for a specific point of time.¹⁶⁶ Stowers’ attempt to limit the universalistic implications of Romans 3:10-19 is part of his broader reinterpretation of 1:18 – 3:20,¹⁶⁷ but despite some helpful insights, Stowers’ reading of Paul’s critique as applying only to gentiles and a limited number of Jews fails to take fully into account the apocalyptic significance of the Christ-event.¹⁶⁸ Paul’s point is precisely that being within the Jewish community does not exclude one from God’s indictment of humanity, as the Jews as a community are under sin. For Paul, the ‘righteous’ are those who do the law, but this is only possible in Christ (cf., 2:12-16,

¹⁶⁴ Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 157.

¹⁶⁵ For this use of the law in Paul, see Richard B. Hays, “Three Dramatic Roles: The Law in Romans 3-4,” in *Paul and the Mosaic Law: The Third Durham-Tübingen Symposium on Earliest Christianity and Judaism (Durham, September, 1994)*, ed. James D. G. Dunn, 151-164 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001), 155-158.

¹⁶⁶ Stowers, *Rereading of Romans*, 184-187.

¹⁶⁷ He argues that Paul’s point throughout 1:18-3:20 is not that all are under sin, but that ‘God will accept gentiles, provided they behave toward God and neighbour as the law requires, even if they do not become Jews or live as some sort of God-fearing gentile community that possesses the law.’ Stowers, *Rereading of Romans*, 141.

¹⁶⁸ Stowers’ attempt to limit the ‘all’ of Romans simply to gentiles is frequently strained.

23-29). The indictment is against all those who do not recognise Christ as God's eschatological agent.

In Romans 2:1 – 3:20, Paul argues that Jews as well as gentiles are under the power of sin, drawing from the narrative of apocalyptic eschatology. He also, however, indicates that a community remains who 'fulfil the law'. Paul identifies the righteous remnant in terms of eschatological obedience, and includes gentiles within the 'remnant'. Those who avoid the condemnation of being 'under sin' are those who have the law 'written on their heart' (2:13) and who are 'spiritually circumcised' (2:29). Paul insists that Jews maintain an 'advantage' (3:2), but are nevertheless under the power of sin (3:9-20). Because sin transcends nations and communities, the oppression of a nation by another state was less important for Paul than his demonstration that all nations, states, and communities were under the power of sin.

The political features of Paul's assessment of the present are not found in an overt condemnation of foreign rulers, as in the apocalypses, but rather in the eschatological story-line which he assumes. By drawing on the motif of apocalyptic judgment, Paul assumes the idea that foreign rulers were also recipients of God's judgment. As within apocalyptic eschatology, the time before the end was seen as a period of corruption. Paul's concern with the life of the Jews, rather than with nation states, represents a broadening of the political dimension of apocalyptic critique, not its abandonment. Both gentiles and Jews live in disordered communities which are 'under sin'. By extension, Paul's critique includes the 'political' rulers and leaders of these communities, who had led their people towards death rather than life.

Paul's describes the sins of these communities in social ways. The sexual immorality of the pagans was related to the disorder of society and the cosmos. The Jewish failure to keep the law meant that they too were 'under sin'. All communities who have suppressed the knowledge of God, including political communities, follow the pattern of Adam in 1:18-32. In contrast to the Jewish and gentile communities, however, Paul alludes to the existence of a renewed community of God which is not defined by ethnic characteristics. Paul develops his thoughts on this eschatological community later in the letter (Romans 8; 14).¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁹ See chap. 5.

The Cosmic Extent of Corruption

In Romans 5 – 8, Paul places his critique of those in sin in a broader context. Sin is not simply an action but a power that enslaves communities. In fact, sin takes on apocalyptic features, drawing flesh and the law into its power. Romans 5:12-21 sets the scene for Paul's treatment of these themes.

Paul's comparison of Adam to Christ in Romans 5:12-21 is clearly an important text within Romans. At a literary level, Romans 5:12-21 is transitional, summing up the previous discussion and introducing key concepts and themes which Paul develops in his letter.¹⁷⁰ Thematically, the text is the clearest example in Romans of how Paul interprets the Christ-event in apocalyptic terms. Nygren sees it as the interpretative key to the two-aeon schema throughout Romans, the 'high point of the epistle',¹⁷¹ and Davidsen notes, 'this structural typology of Adam and Christ is not simply a comparison, but the fundamental structure of signification in the Pauline universe of meaning.'¹⁷²

Paul has spoken of sin primarily in terms of deeds and actions in Romans 1-4, in Romans 5:12-21, he depicts sin in cosmic, universal terms, and Christ as the eschatological redeemer of those in sin.¹⁷³ Paul explains why those outside of Christ are subject to sin by comparing Adam to Christ, both of whom introduced new eras of human existence. Romans 5:12-21 is clearly based on an apocalyptic story-line, though one modified by the Christ-event. Thus, sin (5:12a) leads to judgment (5:12b), which leads to redemption (5:17). The modification of the story-line is found in Paul's association of redemption with the Christ-event, rather than with a future era. By depicting Christ as 'new Adam', Paul reveals that he is the eschatological hinge of the new creation. Adam, in contrast, is the paradigm for behaviour in the old aeon.

Paul's depiction of sin in Romans 5:12-21 takes on apocalyptic characteristics. Beker notes that while apocalypses envisage concrete historical, as well as angelic,

¹⁷⁰ Romans 5 as a whole is a significant transition point in the letter. As well as picking up earlier themes, it anticipates the development of the argument. See Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 96-98.

¹⁷¹ Nygren, *Romans*, 209.

¹⁷² Ole Davidsen, "The Structural Typology of Adam and Christ. Some Modal-Semiotic Comments on the Basic Narrative of the Letter to the Romans," in *The New Testament and Hellenistic Judaism*, ed. Peder Borgen and Søren Giversen, 244-262 (Denmark: Aarhus University Press, 1995), 250.

¹⁷³ For the eschatological significance of Christ in this text, see chap. 5.

enemies, Paul personifies sin and the flesh as the real enemies of God.¹⁷⁴ Paul assumes the story-line of apocalyptic eschatology, but describes cosmic enemies in terms of abstract powers rather than angels. Although he designates the cosmic powers differently than the apocalypses, his description of them finds precedent in the apocalyptic literature, particularly in those characterised by de Boer as involving ‘cosmological apocalyptic eschatology.’¹⁷⁵ Throughout *I Enoch*, for instance, the spiritual powers represented by the Watchers influence the destiny of humanity (*I Enoch* 6-19). The angel Uriel tells Enoch, ‘They have defiled the people and will lead them into error’ (19:1). Daniel certainly depicts the battles in the heavens as determinative for events on earth (Dan 10-11), while texts from Qumran illustrate a similar perspective (CD 2:17-3:1). Paul depicts sin as a cosmic power that destroys communities.¹⁷⁶

Paul’s depiction of sin as a cosmic power did not represent a depoliticisation of hope. Rather, the cosmic ‘spiritual’ enemies replace national ones because God’s community was no longer identical with an ethnic community, or a part thereof. His perspective has been shifted by the Christ-event. Paul’s depiction of sin actually functions to expand the apocalyptic vision, not ‘spiritualise’ it. The cosmic powers are the rulers of the old aeon, which includes its social and political structures. The cosmic context of the human condition is described through Romans 5-8.

Sin (‘ἁμαρτία’) is a protagonist in the first and final verses of Romans 5:12-21 (5:12, 21). Sin ‘came into the world through one man’ (5:12), and ‘exercised dominion in death.’ (5:21). Paul contrasts it with the freedom brought by Christ (thus both of the clauses mentioned are in contrast to a following clause), but, in so doing, he characterises it as a power. De Boer argues that forensic apocalyptic eschatology and cosmological apocalyptic eschatology appear together in the text, but that the latter is more central.¹⁷⁷ Thus, the view that sin was the result of disobedience

¹⁷⁴ Beker, *Paul the Apostle*, 145.

¹⁷⁵ De Boer, *Defeat of Death*, 84-88; idem. “Paul and Apocalyptic Eschatology,” 357-360.

¹⁷⁶ It is difficult to know how exactly to read this description of sin as a power throughout Romans 5 – 8. Its similarity to the role of cosmic forces within apocalyptic, however, makes a purely metaphorical reading unlikely. Paul conceives of sin as a power that enslaves.

¹⁷⁷ De Boer, *Defeat of Death*, 157-165.

(forensic apocalyptic eschatology) is subordinate to the view of sin as a cosmic power (cosmological apocalyptic eschatology).¹⁷⁸

In Romans 5:12-21, Adam is not simply the initiator of the old aeon, but also a paradigm for action within it. Adam was the first transgressor but also introduces the power of sin into the world. Unbelievers 'live out' the story of Adam, just as believers 'live in' Christ. Dunn rejects that notion that Adam is some kind of representative figure, arguing that the distinction between the one and the many effectively rules it out.¹⁷⁹ This distinction, however, relates to the prior choices of Adam and Christ which determine the history of humanity. No one could 'sin in the likeness of Adam' because Adam's sin was determinative for humanity in a way in which the sins of his descendants were not. Likewise, the life, death, and resurrection of Christ are distinguished from those who follow Christ because Christ's actions inaugurated a new aeon. This does *not* mean, however, that aspects of the story of Adam or of Christ are not re-presented in the lives of others. Paul here distinguishes between Christ and his followers but in other texts invokes notions of participation, particularly in the much discussed phrase 'in Christ.'¹⁸⁰ Likewise, the distinction between Adam and his descendants does not rule out some notion of participation here too. The presence of an 'Adam narrative' behind 1:18-32 suggests that Paul does see Adam as a paradigmatic figure in which people participate. The parallel between 'death entered through the sin of one man,' and, 'death entered through the sins of many people' is also best understood as a deliberate attempt to connect the sin of humans generally to Adam's sin.¹⁸¹ Adam's disobedience implemented all humanity in the threat and the realm of sin and death and continues to implement humanity in so far as humans choose to live out the Adam narrative.

Romans 5:12-21 sets the scene for his treatment of sin, the law, and flesh in Romans 6 – 8. These three 'powers' created a web of slavery which causes the deterioration of human communities and sets the context for the Christ-event. Paul redraws the apocalyptic story-line, so that the 'problem' becomes broader than that in apocalyptic

¹⁷⁸ De Boer notes that Paul's reading of sin in cosmological-apocalyptic terms, and the transition from forensic to cosmological themes in Romans 5-8, shows that cosmological-apocalyptic eschatology is more central for Paul; *Defeat of Death*, 153-155.

¹⁷⁹ Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 272-273.

¹⁸⁰ Rom 3:24; 6:11, 23; 8:1, 39; 12:5; 1 Cor 1:20; Phil 3:8, 9; Col 3:4

¹⁸¹ Cf., 4 Ezra 3:21, 24.

literature. Paul's view of the human condition is more negative than apocalyptic,¹⁸² but includes the political within its scope.

In Romans 6, Paul relates sin as a cosmic power to the lives of believers. Followers of Christ, by participating in Christ's death, are freed from the dominion of sin and death (6:6).¹⁸³ Believers, however, must 'actualise' this freedom in presenting themselves to God (6:12-14). Regardless of the difficulty in identifying the source of Paul's language here, it is clear that Paul invokes a notion of participation. By identifying with Christ's crucifixion, believers can look forward to participating in his resurrection and future eschatological life.

Paul connects terms of sovereignty with sin and death. The primary example is 'βασιλεύω', which occurs a number of times in Romans 5 – 6 (5:14, 17, 21; 6:12), but Paul also depicts sin as a dominating Lord (6:15-23). The significance of these terms lies in their indication of the scope of sin's power. By drawing on political terms, Paul emphasises the extent and ubiquity of sin. This transcends politics but does not exclude it. Rather, it shows the extent to which Paul sees the present as corrupt; sin rules over all of humanity other than those 'in Christ'.

In Romans 7, Paul makes an unprecedented move for a Jew by depicting the law as a force through which sin works.¹⁸⁴ Romans 7:1-6 depicts the law in a primarily eschatological context. Paul uses the analogy of a widow released from legal observance to her husband by his death to illustrate that, with Christ's death and resurrection, the period of obedience to the Law is over. The law is presented as part of the old era, taken captive to be misused by sin. In contrast, believers fulfil the 'law' but apart from 'works of the law' by the eschatological Spirit (Rom 8:2-4). Release from the law, then, means release from the flesh. Because of the close relationship between flesh and law, release from law means that believers, 'are slaves not under the old written code but in the new life of the Spirit.' (7:6). The contrast between 'old' and 'new' suggests an eschatological dimension. Käsemann notes,

¹⁸² Keck, "Paul and Apocalyptic," 237.

¹⁸³ Death is closely connected by Paul with sin. Death exercised dominion (5:14) as a result of Adam's sin (5:17).

¹⁸⁴ The law, of course, is one of the most hotly debated topics in Pauline studies. For surveys of interpretations in this topic, see Watson, *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles*, 1-18; Thielman, *Plight to Solution*, 1-27; Stephen Westerholm, *Israel's Law and the Church's Faith: Paul and His Recent Interpreters* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988), 15-102.

‘The spearhead of the Pauline doctrine of justification is that along with sin and death it ascribes the law to the old aeon.’¹⁸⁵

Lest Paul’s argument leads believers to regard the law as evil, Romans 7:7-25 shows that it is not the law which is evil, but flesh which has been manipulated by the law. Paul reflects on his life outside Christ in light of his experience in Christ.¹⁸⁶ Although the law is not sin, the law gave an opportunity to sin to manifest itself. A positive purpose for the Law remains, however, insofar as it reveals the extent of sin (7:13). The problem is not the law per se, but flesh which had manipulated the law. Believers who die to ‘flesh’ inevitably die to the misused law. The ‘flesh’, however, is unable to fulfil the law, and so is the place in which sin works.

In Romans 8, Paul takes flesh as characteristic of the old era and contrasts it with the Spirit. Paul begins with the assertion that believers are no longer condemned ‘in Christ Jesus.’ God has remedied the problem of the flesh by crucifying the ‘flesh’ in his son, making possible reconciliation with God (8:1-4). Paul draws an opposition between those who live in the Spirit and those who live in the flesh, implying a sharp dualism between believers and unbelievers. Such dualism was characteristic of apocalyptic eschatology. For Paul, those in the flesh (a) are under the power of sin (8:3), (b) are unable to fulfil the Law (8:4, 7), (c) set their minds in the things of the flesh (8:5), (d) are hostile to God (8:7), and (e) cannot please God (8:8). Those, ‘in the Spirit’, on the other hand, (a) are set free from the law of sin and death (8:2), (b) fulfil the Law’s ‘righteous requirements’ (8:4), (c) set their minds on the things of the Spirit (8:5), (d) are at peace with God (8:6), and (e) (implicitly) please God (8:8). Paul’s argument, then, implies that all who are not ‘in Christ’ are ‘in the flesh’. Although his logic does not employ temporal categories, the dimension of ‘life’ in Christ and the Spirit imply a new way of life made possible eschatologically, as it is only in the eschaton that the Spirit arrives and the Messiah rules.

Paul identifies ‘flesh’ (‘σάρξ’) as the sphere of human corruptibility. Unlike in the rest of the New Testament, ‘σάρξ’ frequently has a negative sense in Paul’s letters, especially in Romans and Galatians, where it refers to rebellious humanity (Rom

¹⁸⁵ Käsemann, *Romans*, 186

¹⁸⁶ Ben Witherington, *Paul's Narrative Thought World: The Tapestry of Tragedy and Triumph* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994), 27. Other scholars argue that Paul is reflecting on experience ‘in Christ’, e.g., Cranfield, *Romans I*, 340-347.

6:19; 8:3; Gal 2:20; 5:13; 2 Cor 1:17). This sense of the word needs to be sharply distinguished from the neutral sense found throughout the New Testament, and also in Paul (Rom 1:3; 2:28; 1 Cor 1:26). Paul is not making any negative judgments about the body as such, only about the person in rebellion against God. The closest parallel to Paul's use of this language is found in the Qumran community.¹⁸⁷ Particularly in the Community Rule, flesh is identified as the place where evil takes place (1QS 11:7, 9, 12). Similarly in Romans 7 and 8, sin manifests itself in human flesh.

Paul, sharing the perspective of apocalyptic eschatology, sketches a picture of a world seriously out of kilter and in need of redemption. Paul's critique of the present begins early in the letter, with 1:18-3:20, but includes his later analysis of Sin (Rom 5-6), the flesh (Rom 8), and the law (Rom 7). As a cosmic power, Sin binds people to the flesh and corrupts the use of the law. Paul's focus on the corruption of all implicitly includes the rulers of the world, who are certainly not exempt from participation in sin. The 'spiritual' dimensions of Paul's view of the corrupt present – whereby he identifies the real rulers of the old aeon with sin, death, and flesh, all of which usurp the law – has led interpreters to focus on personal and existential aspects of redemption, whereby sin, for instance becomes an abstract tendency. The apocalyptic character of these abstractions, however, means that communities and societies are ruled by them, not just individuals. Although political implications are not brought to the fore, they exist within this critique.

The Challenge of Future Judgment

As well as the theme of present judgment, and its assessment of society as corrupt, Romans includes passages related to God's future judgment.¹⁸⁸ Although Paul's references do not include detailed descriptions such as those found in apocalypses (*1 Enoch* 46, 48, 97; 4 Ezra 7:113-114), they imply that the present would be overturned by the coming of God's new world.¹⁸⁹ As in the apocalyptic literature, future judgment limits the time left for the present ruling order. Paul does not

¹⁸⁷ W. D. Davies, "Paul and the Dead Sea Scrolls: Flesh and Spirit," in *The Scrolls and the New Testament*, ed. Krister Stendahl (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1958), 159-171.

¹⁸⁸ For a general discussion of the theme of judgment in Paul, see Vos, *The Pauline Eschatology*, 261-278.

¹⁸⁹ The way in which the coming world is 'new' will be discussed in Ch. 5.

emphasise this theme in Romans but its presence is a significant indication of political undercurrents in his theology.

Within his discussion with the interlocutor of Romans 2, Paul emphasises that God's future judgment is connected to human deeds (2:6-8). Those who 'do good' will gain eternal life, but those who 'are self-seeking and who obey not the truth but wickedness' will receive God's wrath. Interpreters have struggled with the relationship between Romans 2:6 ('he will repay according to each one's deeds') and Romans 3:28 ('a person is justified by faith apart from works prescribed by the law').¹⁹⁰ While some suggest that Paul is speaking hypothetically, in view of the references to gentile Christian eschatological obedience in Romans 2:12-16, 25-29, it is likely that those who 'do good' are those 'in Christ'. Justification is indicative of faith and so a basis of acceptance at the end-time.¹⁹¹ Although justification is a matter of grace, Paul expects that believers will assume a Christ-centred existence in which they pursue the good (12:9, 21). Grace does not render obedience unnecessary (Romans 6:1-4). Paul associates 'wrath', 'anguish' and 'turmoil' with those who are 'self-seeking'. Although Paul does not give details, these terms hint at eschatological judgment faced by humanity under God's wrath. Both Jew and gentile are liable to such judgment, for God is impartial (2:11). Paul's critique includes the whole of society, including its rulers.

In Romans 2:15-29, Paul also refers to the future judgment of gentiles who 'do instinctively what the law requires' (2:14). In view of our earlier discussion, the gentiles here are those gentiles in Christ. Paul is not speaking about gentiles as such, but about those gentiles who have experienced God's eschatological fulfilment. Although these gentiles obey the law, they do so in Spirit and not in letter, so that they have an ambiguous status. It is this which leads to their 'conflicting thoughts'.¹⁹² Paul associates the day when this judgment takes place with Christ. Judgement is not confined to these gentiles, however, but will include all; 'God, through Jesus Christ, will judge the secret thoughts of all' (2:16).

The text also indicates that Christ plays a prominent role in eschatological judgment. The association of God with Christ in judgment is found throughout Paul's letters.

¹⁹⁰ For a survey of interpretations, see Longenecker, "Focus of Romans," 51-55.

¹⁹¹ Barrett, *Romans*, 45-48; Käsemann, *Romans*, 57-59; Stuhlmacher, *Romans*, 40-41, 45-47.

¹⁹² So Wright, "Law in Romans 2," 146-147.

Romans 8:31-39, the poetic climax of Paul's argument from 1:18-8:39, again connects judgment to Christ. In 8:31-39, Christ is in a position to condemn, but acts as an advocate for believers. Christ exercises a cosmic judicial role.

Future judgment is also a theme in Romans 14, where it functions as a warning to the Christian community.¹⁹³ In Romans 2, Paul appealed to God's judgment as a levelling factor; those who confidently judge others risk God's judgment. Similarly, in Romans 14, Paul dissuades believers from judging each other by reminding them that they stand in judgment before the same Lord (14:46). The reality of the future judgment puts their judgments of each other into perspective. In 14:10, Paul tells the Roman Christians, 'we will all stand before the judgment seat of God' (14:10) and follows this with a text from Isaiah (49:18). Although Paul is applying the theme of judgment to the believing community, it nevertheless remains for all.

In Romans 13:11-14, Paul appeals to the imminence of the end in order to exhort believers to 'live honourably' and to 'put on Christ'. The coming day is depicted as 'light' which will overturn the darkness. Even though Paul does not date the time of the eschatological consummation, he encourages his readers by assuring them that salvation is closer than when they first came to faith. Paul's focus is on the imminence of salvation for believers, and so he does not refer explicitly to judgment. Nonetheless, Paul implies that those who 'gratify the flesh' will face judgment rather than redemption.

Although his perspective is modified by the Christ-event, Paul draws on the eschatological story-line of apocalyptic in dealing with judgment. The corruption of the present involved Paul's critique of the gentile and Jewish community, both of which were 'under sin'. Jews and gentiles not only committed sin, but were in bondage to it. Only in Christ is redemption possible. Although Paul's emphasis on the coming judgment is community-orientated, the imminence of the coming judgment posed a threat and challenge to all human life, including to the powers that be. God's present and future judgment placed an eschatological limit on the legitimacy of human authority.

¹⁹³ See chap. 5.

The Imperial House and the Judgment of God

As we saw earlier, in Romans 1:18 – 3:20 Paul argues that all are under sin. Paul includes gentiles in his critique (1:18-32), but also condemns the Jewish community (2:1 – 3:9), contrasting its disobedience to the law with the fulfilment of the law among those in God's eschatological community (2:12-16, 25-29). In Romans 3:9-20, Paul summarises the section by drawing on scripture to illustrate the ubiquity of sin. Paul's critique is clearly intended to be inclusive, crossing ethnic as well as religious boundaries.

Romans 1:18-32 focuses particularly on pagan society. The description in the text of the 'wicked men' who suppress the truth (1:18) makes it clear that pagans are primarily in view. Idolatry is the root sin which Paul critiques throughout this text (1:22-23, 25). The echoes of the Wisdom of Solomon throughout this text also make it likely that Paul's target is pagan culture and community (Wis 9:1-3; 13:1-19; 14:22-31).¹⁹⁴ Stuhlmacher notes that, 'Paul takes over in 1:18-32 the generalizing language of the Hellenistic Jewish critique of the immoral Gentiles.'¹⁹⁵

Paul's critique of pagans focuses on idolatry (1:19-23) and sexual immorality (1:24-27), and ends with a general list of wicked deeds (1:29-31). Paul's focus is on the social dimension of the behaviour. His is not simply describing 'private' sins, but behaviour which affects communities. Because ancient societies connected social behaviour (and misbehaviour) with political rule,¹⁹⁶ Paul's critique borders on the political realm. His criticism of ethical chaos in pagan society implicitly critiqued the rulers who ran the society. Paul's critique included the emperors and rulers, as well as the *hoi polloi*.

The emperors who ruled over Rome fit Paul's critique because they behaved in the ways described in Romans 1:18-32.¹⁹⁷ As representative pagans, emperors were idolatrous, sexually immoral, and often wicked. Even though Paul's focus is

¹⁹⁴ Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 51-52; Stuhlmacher, *Romans*, 34-35; Adams, *Constructing the World*, 156-157.

¹⁹⁵ Stuhlmacher, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 35

¹⁹⁶ Rutgers notes that, 'The Romans never sharply distinguished, as we often do, between politics and ethics. Their vision of human society represented a sort of moral political continuum,' Rudich, *Political Dissidence*, xvii-xviii. By extension, an unethical society reflects a disordered polity.

¹⁹⁷ Elliott, *Liberating Paul*, 192-195; Cassidy, *Paul in Chains*, 151-154. The following analysis draws particularly on Elliott's comments on this text.

deliberately general, examples of such sins could be found in the imperial house. Several emperors throughout the first century were known for their excessively immoral behaviour (sexual and social), and all of the emperors were involved in what was regarded as 'idolatrous' behaviour by Jews and Christians. They represented the best and worst of gentile society. For readers of Paul's letter in Rome, the criticism of pagan vices could bring to mind stories of imperial misbehaviour which circulated in the city. Paul did not deliberately critique individual emperors in Romans 1:18-32, but his *general* critique of pagan society fits instances of imperial behaviour. The judgment of pagan society expressed in Romans 1 included Roman rulers.

Paul's hostility to idolatry within Romans 1 rests on his staunch Jewish monotheism, characteristic of Jews in antiquity. Because of their belief in one God alone, Jews refused to offer recognition or worship to idols or foreign gods.¹⁹⁸ The Decalogue begins with the call to accept only one God (Exod 20:4-5), and polemic against idolatry is found throughout the Jewish scriptures, especially in the prophets (Isa 40:18-20; 44:9-20; Jer 10:3-5). The emphasis on monotheism continued into the Greco-Roman period, and is found not least in the Wisdom of Solomon, to which Paul alludes throughout Romans 1 (Wis 12 – 14). For Jews, idolatry threatened God's identity as the God who is above all representation.

Drawing on this staunch monotheistic stance, Paul describes the root cause of pagan wickedness as idolatry (Rom 1:18-23). He depicts idolatry as a form of self-deception, whereby gentiles repress their knowledge of God, and God's glory, and replace it with images of humans and animals. In Romans 1:23b, Paul gives examples of the images gentiles construct; 'a mortal human being or birds or four-footed animals or reptiles.' In listing these four types of images, Paul is clearly intending to be inclusive. Images of gods as animals were more familiar to Egyptians than Romans, but Paul's mention of images of mortal beings would resonate with the Roman context of the readers.

Statues of the gods were found throughout the city of Rome.¹⁹⁹ In its many temples, residents could offer up prayers and sacrifices to deities depicted in human form.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁸ Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 31-38.

¹⁹⁹ Stambaugh, *Ancient Roman City*, 215-218. As Stambaugh notes, 'The ancient sources show how pervasive temples were in the lives of Roman urbanites,' 24.

Statues of the gods were also on public display throughout the city, existing as a permanent part of the civic architecture. By placing images of gods throughout Rome, rulers and residents showed their piety and acknowledged the divine within their community. As Feeney notes, ‘the cultic representation of the gods in the city is a way of binding them in civic life, anchoring them as fellow-citizens who partake of the time and space of the other citizens.’²⁰¹

While pagan society recognised idols, the Roman emperor as *Pontifex Maximus* had an important role in mediating between the gods and the empire. Part of Augustus’ restoration was in rebuilding temples which had broken down, reconstituting old religious orders, and encouraging the development of civil religion.²⁰² Emperors sacrificed to the gods on behalf of the Roman state. Different emperors also adopted ‘favourite’ gods in accordance with their rule. Idolatry was part of everyday life for Roman gentiles.

As well as ‘worshipping idols’, the Roman emperor became an object of worship in his own right. Although this occurred predominantly in the east, even in the west imperial ideology proclaimed a close relationship between emperors and the gods.²⁰³ The emperors typically prohibited an imperial cult in Rome, but nevertheless encouraged residents to pay them religious honours, such as offering libations to the *genius* of particular emperors (e.g., Hor. *Car.* 4, 4, 31-36).²⁰⁴ The image of the emperor was also everywhere, on coins as well as on statues.²⁰⁵ Hopkins notes that the ubiquity of this image, ‘helped maintain a living presence of the emperors in public places and in the consciousness of subjects.’²⁰⁶

Jews and Christians regarded this development as repugnant, a confirmation of the sin of the pagan world. Although the imperial cult was predominantly an eastern

²⁰⁰ Feeney offers a ‘taxonomy’ of the gods in Rome in which one of the categories refers to ‘anthropomorphic, personalised gods’, Feeney, *Literature and Religion at Rome*, 83-114.

²⁰¹ Feeney, *Literature and Religion at Rome*, 94.

²⁰² Aug. *Res Gestae* 7, 10, 21, 29.

²⁰³ See chap. 2 for discussion of this point.

²⁰⁴ Fishwick notes that cultic honours around an emperor’s ‘numen’ differed from honours to the ‘genius’; cf. Fishwick, *Imperial Cult in the Latin West*, 375-387

²⁰⁵ Zanker, *Power of Images*, 297-302; Hopkins, “Divine Emperors,” 221-224. Hopkins notes that Romans did not actually worship the statues, but the image itself was also problematic for Jews and Christians.

²⁰⁶ Hopkins, “Divine Emperors,” 223.

phenomenon, imperial ideology in the west as well as the east depicted the emperors as closely related (genealogically as well as relationally) to the gods.²⁰⁷

In describing idolatry as the root cause of pagan sin, Paul critiqued the foundation of Roman life. Whereas Polybius claimed that the piety of the Romans had made Rome great,²⁰⁸ Paul connects Roman piety (its idolatry) with social and cosmic disorder. Paul's reference to images of human beings could remind readers of the images of the emperor which, alongside those of the gods, were found throughout Rome.

In Romans 1:24-28, Paul describes the consequences of pagan idolatry in terms of sexual immorality, using homosexual behaviour as a specific example. Both women and men have turned away from their 'natural' state and embraced 'disordered' sexuality. As discussed earlier, Paul's condemnation of homosexual behaviour rested on a phallogocentric view of sexuality, and a taken-for-granted hierarchy of gender roles. Sexual misbehaviour was also seen as indicative of a breakdown in society, where men were acting the part of women and women were usurping 'unnatural' roles. By violating 'active' and 'passive' roles, gentiles blatantly transgressed the sexual order which Paul sees as appointed by God, a sexual order taken for granted in the society in which Paul moved. We also noted that homosexual behaviour was a fairly common practice in the ancient world. Jews and Christians would not be short of examples of such behaviour in their neighbourhood.

In the imperial house, 'sexual immorality' was rife among the emperors. Elliott points out that the sexual practices of Tiberius, Gaius, and Nero fit Paul's description in Romans 1:24-27, and indeed that Paul has the imperial house particularly in mind.²⁰⁹ Paul's critique, however, is not about specific individuals or classes, but about pagan society as a whole. But even though Paul's critique did not focus on Roman emperors, it included them within its scope.

Nero, for instance, enjoyed numerous 'unnatural' sexual deeds as emperor. His scandalous sexual behaviour is described with relish by later historians, who depicted it as part of Nero's general wickedness. Suetonius describes in detail the depravity of

²⁰⁷ See chap. 4.

²⁰⁸ 4.56.6-7. Polybius claims that the piety ('superstition') of Roman residents maintained the cohesion of the Roman state.

²⁰⁹ Elliott, *Liberating Paul*, 192-195. Suetonius is the source for these instances; Suet. *Tib.* 43; *Gaius* 24, 36, 38; *Ner.* 26-29.

the emperor.²¹⁰ He deals both with Nero's public life and his private life, but by his juxtaposition of both, he reflected the view that sexual sins and social sins were closely related. In public life, Nero assumed the role of an artist, singing and entering musical competitions. Suetonius derides such behaviour as completely inappropriate and indicative of Nero's depraved mind.²¹¹ Suetonius' also gives a full catalogue of Nero's sexual disorder. Nero engaged in promiscuity, incest and rape. As part of his sexual practice, he also engaged in homosexuality. Combining his lust with power, he even 'married' one young eunuch to whom he had taken a liking.

It is difficult to know how serious to take some of the accusations, and when exactly the deeds took place. After all, the historians of Rome had their own axes to grind.²¹² Nevertheless, it is likely that the long-winded critiques of Nero have at least some basis in fact. Even if the specific behaviour of Nero took place after Paul wrote, Nero was simply following earlier emperors who had (although more modestly) combined sexuality with power. Paul was not specifically critiquing Nero, but as Cassidy notes,

Paul's teaching against murder and against libidinous behavior represented, *in principle*, a powerful critique of the brutal and depraved practices that Nero came to exemplify.²¹³

Paul uses the formula 'God gave them up' to introduce a final list of vices, which includes 'every kind of wickedness' (Rom 1:28-32). Paul's relates these vices to a 'debased mind' (1:28), connected to human idolatry. Paul's list is again not meant to be descriptive of any particular figure or class, but applies generally to pagan society. Several of the characteristics, however, also fit imperial behaviour. Emperors frequently murdered rivals to the throne, taking pre-emptive action against possible enemies. While Paul probably speaks of general disrespect for elders in 1:30, those 'rebellious towards parents' (1:30) certainly includes emperors who committed matricide or patricide in order to hold onto power.

²¹⁰ Suet, *Ner.* 8-32

²¹¹ Suetonius attitude to Nero's behaviour reflects the distaste of the Roman elite for artists or musicians. While the elite enjoyed entertainment, they viewed the entertainers themselves in negative terms.

²¹² See, in particular, Joan-Pau Rubiés, "Nero in Tacitus and Nero in Tacitism: The historian's craft," 29-47; and Tamsyan Barton "The *inventio* of Nero: Suetonius," 48-63.

²¹³ Cassidy, *Paul in Chains*, 154

Paul's critique of pagan society is framed in general terms, sketching an inclusive, if unpersuasive, picture of those outside of God's law. Paul draws on Jewish tradition here, and also alludes to the Adam narrative. For his readers in Rome, surrounded by images of the emperor throughout the city, Paul's description of pagan society would also recall the idolatry and immorality characteristic of emperors throughout the first century.

Paul does not draw out the political implications of pagan sins in Romans 1:18-32 because his critique is much broader than simply a concern with nation states. Following this critique of pagans, Paul argues that the Jewish community itself had failed to live up to its own law, and so is in the same position as the unrighteous gentiles of Romans 1 (2:1-29). God shows no partiality. With the diatribe of Romans 2, Paul undermines the righteous status of the interlocutor, who assumes his superiority to the pagan. Paul depicts the whole world as under sin and announces that the community of God, the community which obeys the law, transcends ethnic and religious boundaries. Thus, although readers may have recognised that the emperors were excellent examples of the sins described in Romans 1:18-32, Paul's description of humanity under sin makes the identity of rulers less important than the ubiquity of sin.

Conclusion

Within apocalyptic eschatology, the judgment of humanity formed a crucial part of end-time expectation within the apocalyptic literature. Often this apocalyptic literature singled out foreign rulers as particularly worthy of judgment. Indeed, the origins of apocalyptic eschatology lie in judgment against foreign rulers. Even when judgment became universalised, its implicit criticism of foreign rule remained.

Paul's critique of the present as corrupt assumes the story-line of apocalyptic eschatology, altered by Christ. Paul's depiction of God's judgment implies that present communities outside of Christ – outside of the eschatological community – are under God's wrath and so will be overturned in the future. His critique of paganism in 1:18-3:20 also fits nicely with the behaviour of several emperors throughout the first century, while his apocalyptic denunciation places them within the purview of God's judgment.

If foreign rulers (and Israel herself) would be judged by God, then how should believers respond to this? Should they renounce the claims of an emperor over them? Romans 13:1-7 answers this question in the negative, but Paul maintains that believers live authentic community life as God's new people. Before looking at the relationship between the motif of judgment and Romans 13:1-7, the next two chapters examine further parts of the apocalyptic story-line; the eschatological-redeemer figure (chap. 4), and eschatological life (chap. 5).

CHAPTER FOUR: CHRIST AS APOCALYPTIC REDEEMER IN ROMANS

The variety of guises Jesus dons in Romans indicates the centrality of Christ for Paul. Jesus is a 'son of David' in Romans 1, an agent of God in Romans 3, and a mythic figure in Romans 5, to mention just a few examples. Paul drew on a variety of images for Jesus to encourage believers to place Christ at the centre of their social and religious worlds, believing that a right view of God's work in Christ would lead to a transformation of community.

The diverse images of Christ painted by Paul were united by their connection to eschatological hope. Paul believed that a new age had been inaugurated in Christ, and so gave Jesus a central place in his theology. Paul's depiction of Christ as eschatological redeemer had precedents in the apocalyptic literature. Redemption-figures assumed diverse roles throughout the apocalypses, from transcendent, heavenly figures to earthly, kingly warriors (*1 Enoch* 46:4-6; *T. Levi* 8:13; *T. Jud.* 24:1-6; *Pss. Sol.* 17). Despite the diversity, however, they characteristically had a political role to play, participating in the transition from the present sinful age to God's future era. Drawing on the tradition of eschatological redeemer from the apocalyptic literature, Paul preserved its political dimensions as well as reshaping such traditions in light of Christ's death and resurrection.

Paul's Christology, framed in an apocalyptic context, conflicted with Roman imperial ideology. Belief in Christ as God's redeemer clashed with the divine pretensions of imperial rulers. As well as parallel titles used for the emperor and for Christ, the orientation towards Christ as God's agent is similar to the attitude to the emperor encouraged in Roman imperial ideology. Christology and imperial ideology, despite their different sources, competed for the loyalty of Roman Christians, creating a tension in need of resolution. Through its inheritance of disjunctive eschatology, Paul's depiction of Christ as apocalyptic redeemer involved political features which provide part of the background for Paul's instructions in Romans 13:1-7.

Redemption Figures in Apocalyptic Eschatology

The attempt to find precedents and a background to the early Christian belief in Jesus as messiah has frequently driven research into the 'messianic' texts of the Hebrew

Bible and early Jewish literature. Often this approach has prejudiced the researcher, assuming a static view of the messiah in early Judaism. The picture of the pre-Christian messiah has functioned as precursor to the claim that Jesus as true messiah fulfilled Jewish aspirations.¹ Recent studies of messianism, however, emphasise the fluidity of the concept.² There is no one clearly defined 'messiah' within the Hebrew Scriptures and early Jewish literature. In fact, belief in a messiah or eschatological redemption figure was unnecessary for Jewish eschatological hope.³ In terms of the eschatological story-line, redemption figures feature in the process by which God brings salvation to his people and/or judgment upon his enemies. They are an addition to the narrative sequence of disjunctive eschatology in apocalyptic literature.

Despite the diversity of eschatological redemption figures in apocalyptic literature, there are common features. 'Redemption figures' appear as eschatological protagonists who act as agents of God in the end time. The term 'redemption figures' is broader than 'messiahs' (which typically refers to royal, Davidic figures) but inclusive of this category. It also includes such varied figures as 'Son of Man', 'Son of God', and 'Elect One'. The warrant for using this broader category in including a variety of figures is found in the texts themselves. In the *Similitudes of Enoch* (1 *Enoch* 37 - 71), the 'Chosen One', 'Righteous one', 'Anointed one', and 'Son of Man' all refer to the same figure.⁴ In other texts, figures with different titles assume similar functions.⁵ It is illegitimate to privilege one particular title ('messiah') over others in describing the primary identity of this end-time redeemer when a variety of titles are used for him. It would also be illegitimate to see 'Son of Man' and 'messiah' as referring to the same figure in all texts, but they do share the feature of connection with God's end-time redemption. Although there are crucial differences

¹ For a discussion of how Jewish and Christian assumptions have influenced scholarly approaches to messianism (with particular regard for J. Klausner and S. Mowinckel), see Stanley Isser, "Studies of Ancient Jewish Messianism: Scholarship and Apologetics," *JES* 25, 1 (1988), 56-73.

² See esp. William Scott Green, "Introduction: Messiah in Judaism, Rethinking the Question," in *Judaisms and their Messiahs at the Turn of the Christian Era*, ed. Jacob Neusner, William Scott Green and Ernest S. Frerichs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 1-13.

³ E. P. Sanders, *Judaism*, 295. God is the redeemer (with the help of angels) in 1 *Enoch* 1:3ff.; *T. Levi* 6:5-6; *Jub.* 23:22, 30-31)

⁴ For a discussion of the Messiah in this section of 1 *Enoch*, see George W. E. Nickelsburg, "Salvation without and with a Messiah: Developing Beliefs in Writings Ascribed to Enoch," in *Judaisms and their Messiahs at the Turn of the Christian Era*, ed. Jacob Neusner, William Scott Green and Ernest S. Frerichs, 49-68 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 56-64.

⁵ Thus, the 'man from the Sea' in 4 Ezra 13 plays a similar role to the Messiah in 4 Ezra 11 - 12.

between the end-time figures in different literature, 'redemption figures' captures the similar function of the variety of figures connected with the end time (i.e., association with God's eschatological activity).

Previous research has frequently restricted political features of eschatological redemption figures to specific titles or descriptions. Mowinckel classically contrasted a *political*, Davidic Messiah with a *universalistic* (and so apolitical) Son of Man.⁶ Although he acknowledged that these figures were often combined in the literature, he argued that Jesus' own understanding drew on a pure 'Son of Man' concept and rejected the 'temptation' of a political messianism.⁷ In comparing the two 'messianic' tendencies, Mowinckel noted,

The one side is national, political, this-worldly, with particularistic tendencies, though universalistic when at its best. The other is super-terrestrial, other-worldly, rich in religious content and mythological concepts, universalistic, numinous, at home in the sphere of the 'Holy' and the 'wholly Other'.⁸

Although Mowinckel's arguments have been criticised, the contrast he made between nationalistic messiahs, on the one hand, and apolitical, transcendent messiahs on the other, has remained influential.⁹ This perspective, however, confuses 'political' with 'nationalistic' and misunderstands the function of the language used for redemption figures. The point of difference between the more transcendent redemption figures of the literature and the royal, Davidic messianic tradition resides not in their political connotations, but in the representation of their activity, as either heavenly or earthly.¹⁰ The 'transcendent, heavenly' Messiah is no less nationalistic and political than the Davidic Messiah.¹¹ The attempt to find precedents for Jesus' own self-understanding in a nonnationalistic and apolitical view of redeemers has led to the

⁶ See his chapters, 'The National Messiah', pp. 280-345, and 'The Son of Man', pp. 346-450, in Sigmund Mowinckel, *He That Cometh* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1956)

⁷ Mowinckel, *He That Cometh*, 445-450.

⁸ Mowinckel, *He That Cometh*, 281

⁹ A similar schema is assumed in H. J. Schoeps, *Paul: The Theology of the Apostle in the Light of Jewish Religious History* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1961), 88-97.

¹⁰ Even these categories are misleading; 'heavenly' agents also act upon the earth and the 'earthly' ones receive their mandates from heaven.

¹¹ This misunderstanding also relates to assumptions about the nature of the eschatological time, which will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter. Here it is sufficient to point out that cosmological change, as much as historical transformation, was 'political' insofar as it involved a challenge and change to the historic status quo.

assumption that ‘spiritual’ representations of redemption figures are less political than ‘nationalistic’ ones.

The contention of this section of the chapter is that redemption figures in apocalyptic literature, through their involvement in God’s liberating end-time activity, consistently assumed political as well as religious functions. This applies to the Davidic, anointed one and to the more esoteric ‘Son of Man’, as well as to other figures. Despite the diversity clearly evident in the different depictions of eschatological redemption figures, the figures are political because of their association with the transition between the ages, not because of their ‘nationalistic’ or other qualities. A variety of figures are found throughout the literature. The ‘Son of Man’ in Daniel 7, displacing foreign rulers and assuming sovereignty on God’s behalf, stands as the fountainhead of a whole tradition.¹² Later texts interpreted the ‘Son of Man’ as an actual end-time figure (specifically in the *Similitudes of Enoch*). A separate tradition drew on the biblical tradition of a future Davidic ruler to affirm the expectation that God would bring such a ruler in the end-time (4 Ezra, *Pss. Sol.*). The Dead Sea Scrolls, envisioning two eschatological redemption figures (or perhaps three), illustrate the flexibility of messianic speculation (1QS 9:10-11; CD 12:22-23; 1QSa 2:11-23). Within the literature, the activity of the redemption figures, acting as subordinate agents of God, is more important than their identity, but their political association with the transition between the ages is found throughout.

In its depiction of the ‘Son of Man’ (Dan 7), the book of Daniel provided material for later speculation over redemption figures. Indeed, its influence on the development of later apocalypses leads Collins to claim that, ‘Daniel 7 is arguably the most influential passage in Jewish apocalyptic literature.’¹³ Following the vision of the ancient of days (7:9-10) and the destruction of the beast (7:11-12), Daniel sees in his night visions a figure called the ‘Son of Man’ coming to the ancient of days (7:13-14). He is granted ‘dominion and glory and kingship’ for eternity. While the interpreting angel reveals the identity of the ‘beasts’, the ‘Son of Man’ is mentioned in Daniel 7 no further. This has led to a great deal of disagreement on the actual

¹² The Son of Man in Daniel also draws on previous ANE traditions, but his adaptation of the ‘Son of Man’ concept to the Jewish, apocalyptic world-view is a novelty. For the ANE background of Daniel 7 imagery, see Collins, *Daniel*, 280-294.

¹³ Collins, “From Prophecy to Apocalypticism,” 143

identity of the Son of Man, which have also been important in debates on what Jesus meant by the phrase.

An influential view interprets the Son of Man as a symbol for the people of God.¹⁴ Supporters of this view appeal to the parallel between 7:14 and 7:27. In Daniel 7:14, the 'Son of Man' (Dan 7:13) is given 'dominion and glory and kingship,' and in 7:27, 'kingship and dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven' are presented to the 'people of the holy ones of the Most High'. The 'Son of Man' is equivalent to the 'holy ones of the Most High' (who, in this account, are interpreted as faithful Jews). Jews faithful to the law inherit the dominion previously associated with the beasts. Hartman notes that the faithful Jews,

will come into the divine presence in order to receive everlasting dominion in holiness, nobility, and grandeur, and so will replace the depraved, brutal, and vile kingdoms of the pagan world which were opposed to the reign of God and to his holy people.¹⁵

Other scholars interpret the 'Son of Man' as an angelic figure. One of the most recent advocates of this position is Collins, who argues the 'Son of Man' is best identified with the angel Michael.¹⁶ Collins points to a number of considerations in support of this view, including the use of human figures elsewhere in Daniel for angels (Dan 8:15; 9:21; cf., 1 Enoch 87:2) and the references to Michael battling with other heavenly forces elsewhere in Daniel (Dan 10:21; 12:1). The 'holy ones of the most high' in 7:18, then, best refer to angelic beings, and the language finds a parallel use for angels at Qumran (1QH 11:11-12; 1QM 10:10; 12:7).¹⁷ Collins contends that such an interpretation does not make the depiction irrelevant for suffering Jews, because heavenly events influence earthly events.¹⁸ Rather, the 'angelic' interpretation of the 'Son of Man' recognises the relationship between the earth and the heavenly sphere throughout the ancient world, where 'the priority of the world of

¹⁴ Hartman, *Book of Daniel*, 85-102; Mowinckel, *He That Cometh*, 350; Wright, *New Testament*, 291-297.

¹⁵ Hartman, *Book of Daniel*, 102.

¹⁶ Collins, *Daniel*, 304-310, 312-319; *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 81-85.

¹⁷ Collins, *Daniel*, 313-317.

¹⁸ For criticisms of this thesis, see G. R. Beasley-Murray, "The Interpretation of Daniel 7," *CBQ* 45 (1983), 44-58, 52-55.

the gods is assumed, and earthly affairs are regarded as reflections of the greater reality.¹⁹

Finally, some scholars argue that Daniel 7 depicts an actual redemption figure, operative by God's agency in the end time. Although Beasley-Murray admits that the 'Son of Man' is symbolic for God's people (Dan 7:14, 18), he denies that this excludes a reference to a representative figure,²⁰ and argues that Daniel 7 depicts an actual messianic figure working on behalf of the Jewish faithful.²¹ Even though the Son is not interpreted, neither are other figures within the vision. Beasley-Murray concludes, 'The messianic interpretation of the one like a man is not demonstrable, but it is plausible, and even probable.'²²

The focus of Daniel 7 is not, however, on who/what exactly the 'Son of Man' represents but on God's future victory. Goldingay notes that, 'Chap. 7 invites us to focus on the humanlike figure's role rather than its identity.'²³ The Son of Man in the vision appears after the destruction of the beast and is granted dominion, glory and kingship (Dan 7:9-14). His likeness to man is emphasised in contrast to the animals of the vision and the 'beast' which is destroyed. The authority given to the 'Son of Man' probably also functions as an implicit denunciation of the priesthood granted to Menelaus by the Seleucids.²⁴ Although the 'Son of Man' is not active in the destruction of the beast, he is given the authority and rule of the beast which is destroyed. The nations serve him and 'his dominion is an everlasting dominion' (7:14). The 'Son of Man' takes on a political role, ruling the nations on behalf of the 'Ancient of Days'.

Whatever the original meaning of 'Son of Man' in Daniel 7, later readers interpreted it as a messianic, or eschatological redemptive, figure. Horbury notes, 'messianic exegesis of Dan. vii. 13 probably arose not later than the early first century A.D., and

¹⁹ Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 84.

²⁰ Beasley-Murray, "Daniel 7," 55-56.

²¹ Oegema argues that the 'One like a Man' is messianic precisely as representing God, rather than focusing on his representation of Israel. See Gerbern S. Oegema, *The Anointed and his People: Messianic Expectations from the Maccabees to Bar Kochba*, JSNTSup, ed. Lester L. Grabbe and James H. Charlesworth (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 61-64.

²² Beasley-Murray, "Daniel 7," 45.

²³ Goldingay, *Daniel*, 172.

²⁴ Oegema, *Anointed*, 64-67.

possibly much earlier.²⁵ Thus, even if the Son of Man in Daniel 7 is not an eschatological redeemer figure, later readings of Daniel suggest he would frequently be interpreted as one.

Evidence for a 'messianic' reading of Daniel 7 is found in the *Similitudes of Enoch*, where 'Son of Man' is one of a number of titles employed for the eschatological redemption figure (46:3; 48:2; 62:5). Other titles are the 'Elect One' (39:6; 45:4-5; 49:1-4), the 'Righteous One' (38:2-3; 53:6), and the 'Anointed One' ('χριστός') (48:10; 52:4). Far more important than the titles used for this figure, however, is the particular manner in which he is depicted. The writer of the *Similitudes* seems to have used the titles for a single referent,²⁶ although the titles express particular dimensions of the redeemer to which they refer.

The variety of sources weaved together in the *Similitudes of Enoch*,²⁷ and the layers of tradition which are present, makes it difficult to sketch a full account of its eschatological redeemer.²⁸ What seems clear, however, is that the *Similitudes* depict a transcendent eschatological agent who also assumes political roles, primarily in his activity as judge. The redemption-figure, who here will be called 'Elect One', appears in each of the three Parables.²⁹ In each section of the *Similitudes of Enoch*, he is both a transcendent figure and a judge of the ruling classes.

Although the 'Elect One' is referred to in the first Parable (38:2, 3; 40:5), chapter 46 in the second parable contains the first extended text which deals with him. The passage describes the relationship between God and the one, 'whose face was like that of a human being' (46:1). The figure is identified as the 'Son of Man' (46:3). His righteousness is central, and he is described as having mediatorial functions (opening the 'hidden storerooms', 46:3). The 'Elect One' holds a prominent position under God. Following the introduction to the figure, the rest of the chapter details his

²⁵ W. Horbury, "The Messianic Associations of the 'Son of Man'," *JTS* 36 (1985), 34-55, 52.

²⁶ As Oegema notes, 'in spite of the many differing expressions used here we are dealing with one and the same figure,' Oegema, *Anointed*, 146.

²⁷ Black suggests that the Parables combine the tradition of the Servant in Isaiah, the royal Son of David, and the Danielic 'Son of Man'; Black, *I Enoch*, 189-190.

²⁸ There is a great variety of eschatological statements in the *Similitudes* with little attempt made to work out any coherent eschatology from the disparate elements contained in these chapters,' Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 165.

²⁹ For a discussion of the 'Son of Man' in the Parables, and a refutation of Milik's view that he follows the Christian traditions, see Black, *I Enoch*, 188-189.

judgment of rulers.³⁰ The text notes describes the ‘Son of Man’ as, ‘the One who would remove the kings and the mighty ones from their comfortable seats and the strong ones from their thrones. He shall loosen the reigns of the strong and crush the teeth of sinners’ (46:4). The referents of these descriptions are those who, ‘have become the judges of the stars of heaven... [who] manifest their deeds in oppression... Their power [depends] upon their wealth. And their devotion is to the gods which they have fashioned with their own hands’ (46:7). The allusion to idolatry indicates that the author has foreign rulers – the Romans – in mind, although this does not exclude Jews from among the sinners described throughout the Parables. The deposal of the foreigners is related directly to their rejection of the Son of Man, ‘for they did not extol him and glorify him, and neither do they obey him, the source of their kingship’ (46:1-6).

A similar description is found in *1 Enoch* 48, where the description of the ‘Elect One’ (48:1-6) precedes a detailed discussion of his heavenly role (vss. 7-10). The Son of Man is given a name before all time (vss.2-3), and the author applies Psalms and prophecies from Isaiah to him, reminiscent of New Testament eschatological texts; ‘He will become a staff for the righteous ones... He is the light of the gentiles and he will become the hope of all who are sick in their hearts.’ (vs.5).³¹ The ‘Elect One’ also receives obeisance (vs.6) and will reveal wisdom to the righteous (vs.7). The text connects his role to the humiliation of the ruling classes. Their destruction is witnessed by the elect one, who participates in their destruction (vs. 9). Judgment is again related to the rejection of the ‘Lord of the Spirits and his Messiah’ (vs. 10).

In the third parable, a long passage again describes the judgment of the heavenly classes by the Elect One (61 – 62). The text was considered earlier in chapter three for its perspective on the judgment, but here we can note again the role of the Elect One in executing the judgment. In chapter sixty-two, the ‘kings, the governors, and high officials, and those who rule the earth’ beg for mercy before the Son of Man, but are delivered to angels for punishment. Meanwhile, the righteous rejoice over the judgment of sinners (62:9-13). Despite the references to eschatological redeemers in

³⁰ See chap. 3 for extended discussions of judgment motifs.

³¹ Psalm 23:2; Isaiah 42:6; 49:6. Such language is also familiar, of course, from the New Testament (Luke 2:32).

such transcendent terms, it is clear that the results of judgment includes the powerful becoming the powerless before the Lord.

Throughout *1 Enoch*, then, the 'Elect One' is depicted as the transcendent judge of the ruling classes. His heavenly authority validates his role as God's judge of heaven and earth. Nickelsburg notes that,

The central figure of the Parables is God's *heavenly* vice-regent. For whatever reason, the author of the Parables believed that the biblical promises about the future king and the traditional messianic function of the judgment had to be fulfilled by a transcendent savior - one he found described in other traditions.³²

Although the judgment by the Elect One is depicted as taking place in the heavenly throne room, it involves earthly agents and, specifically, earthly rulers. In fact, the depiction of the judgment by the Son of Man goes beyond other descriptions of judgment in specifically singling out the rulers and rich as sinners as deserving condemnation. The most frequent objects of judgment throughout the *Similitudes* are the 'kings and mighty ones'. This makes it less likely that the 'transcendent' features of this figure were intended to distance him from historical and political reality. The 'Elect One' is involved in destroying God's enemies (nation states, as well as spiritual entities). The transcendent 'spiritual' depiction of an eschatological redemption figure by no means excluded a concern with political and historical reality.

4 Ezra draws from different sources in describing the eschatological redemption figure, and offers different views on his role and activity.³³ In several of the visions, there is no mention of a messiah at all, and one passage appears to oppose such an idea, when the Lord tells Ezra, 'the end shall come through me alone and not through another' (6:6b).³⁴ The key figure referred to in the visions which do mention an

³² Nickelsburg, "Salvation without and with a Messiah," 63

³³ For a discussion of the texts, see Michael Stone, "The Concept of the Messiah in IV Ezra," in *Religions in Antiquity: Essays in Memory of Erwin Ramsdell Goodenough*, Studies in the History of Religion, Jacob Neusner (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1968), 295-312; Stone, *4 Ezra*, 207-213; Myers, *I and II Esdras*, 126-129. In relation to the diversity of messianic and eschatological themes within 4 Ezra, Kreitzer notes, 'It is better to proceed without resorting to complex redactional analysis and accept the inconsistencies at face value as evidence of a flexible and creative mind,' L. Joseph Kreitzer, *Jesus and God in Paul's Eschatology*, JSNTSup, ed. David Hill (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1987), 60.

³⁴ In fact, however, the emphasis on God's sole eschatological agency is not inconsistent with a messiah-figure playing some part in the end events. Thus, chap. 13's interpretation of the vision

eschatological figure, however, is 'the anointed one' (χριστός).³⁵ Although this term is found within the exilic and postexilic Hebrew Scriptures, where it refers to the coming, eschatological king (Jer 23:5f; Ezek 34:23f; Hag 2:20-23; Isa 11:1f),³⁶ only in 4 Ezra and 2 Baruch is this figure clearly delineated.

The first section of 4 Ezra to mention a redemption figure occurs in the third vision (6:35-9:25), where a short section relates details of a millennial kingdom of the messiah (called by the Lord, 'my son the Messiah') (7:27-44). This text depicts the revelation of the messiah, and his death after four hundred years. The world is then reduced to primeval silence and, following a 'seven day' period, resurrection to judgment takes place. The text clearly emphasises the temporary nature of the messianic age, and affirms that the messiah will not take part in the future age. Instead, the faithful shall be revealed with the righteous and 'rejoice' with them for four hundred years. The messiah apparently plays no role apart from being a 'wonder' for the faithful.³⁷ Although the messiah is not described in royal terms, he is described as a feature of the temporary kingdom. He replaces the foreign rulers, even if he does not take their place as a ruler. In this text, the messiah is a sign, a wonder of the end.

The eagle vision (11:1-12:51), the next section to deal with a redemption figure, depicts the messiah as involved in the destruction of Rome. Unlike in the third vision, the messiah here plays an active role,³⁸ and is depicted as a lion who confronts the evil eagle (11:36-46). The interpretation of the vision identifies the lion as the Messiah (12:31-34). The messiah denounces and destroys the Roman Empire (12:33). He also redeems the faithful remnant in preparation for the *final* judgment (12:34).

appears to remove traditional messianic attributes from the 'man from the sea' and apply them to God, see Stone, *4 Ezra*, 158-159.

³⁵ Note, however, the use of the term 'Son' in chap. 13 which is used for the same messianic figure as in the Eagle Vision.

³⁶ Hesse, *TDNT IX* (1974), 506-509. In the early texts of the Hebrew Bible, however, the term applied to those generally who had been anointed. In its verbal form, the term was typically applied to the anointing of kings (1 Sam 16:3, 12f; 9:16), though other forms of anointing could take place. For a discussion of the term in the Hebrew Bible, see Hesse, *TDNT IX* (1974), 496-509.

³⁷ Stone, *4 Ezra*, 209, 215-216.

³⁸ Kreitzer, *Jesus and God*, 61-63.

The means of the messiah's destruction of Rome is not named in the text, which simply affirms, 'he will destroy them' (12:33). Whereas the third vision depicts the messiah as acting *after* the deliverance of his people, here the messiah acts during and for their deliverance. The messiah takes on the role of displacing Rome, rebuking it for its oppressive tactics.

The sixth vision (4 Ezra 13:1-58) labels the redeemer figure as the 'Son', alluding to the 'Son of Man' in Daniel 7.³⁹ In this vision, a man arises from the sea and destroys his enemies with fire from his mouth, before calling to himself people of peace (13:1-13). In the interpretation of the vision,⁴⁰ the man from the sea is described as 'Son'. His task is to 'deliver his creation' as well as to guide those remaining after his destruction of enemies (13:26). The Son is described as kept before creation (13:26), a reference to his pre-existence which is implied in the earlier passages of 4 Ezra.⁴¹ Further, the Son is depicted in clear transcendent terms. The seer notes that the Son, faced with approaching enemies, 'neither lifted his hand nor held a spear or any weapon of war' (13:8). The reference to the use of 'fire' in 13:9 probably refers to the Torah. Although the interpretation rules out a militaristic redemption-figure, the destruction is clearly a real one. How, exactly, destruction 'by means of the law' takes place is not explained, but clearly this envisions an end to the political status-quo.

Several interpreters have pointed out the lack of explicitly royal or Davidic characteristics of the messiah in 4 Ezra. Stone argues that the 'author very much underplayed the Messiah's role as king and to a somewhat lesser extent as warrior.'⁴² Esler concludes from the lack of royal vocabulary that, 'the role of the messiah is a non-political one.'⁴³ Certainly, the lack of royal characteristics for the redeemer in 4 Ezra stands in contrast to texts such as Pss. Sol. 17, where the military features of the messiah are clear. Overdrawing the contrast between heavenly/earthly redeemers, however, can lead to the false conclusion that the messiah was 'non political'. The activity of the messiah shows that the role he assumes is political, even if not royal.

³⁹ Oegema, *Anointed*, 219-220.

⁴⁰ Stone notes that the interpretation is not as closely linked to the vision as the Eagle Vision is, Stone, *4 Ezra*, 396-397.

⁴¹ Stone, *4 Ezra*, 401.

⁴² Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 41.

⁴³ Esler, "Social Function," 115.

Thus, the messiah displaces and destroys the Roman Empire in the Eagle Vision and the vision of the Man from the sea. Although the messiah does not play a role in the deliverance itself, the Eagle Vision and the Man from the Sea show that the messiah displaces and destroys the Roman Empire, as well as other foreign nations. The eschatological redemption figure is associated with the transition between the present age and the age to come, and takes on political features in this association.

As noted earlier, the depiction of messianic figures in *Psalms of Solomon* (18 – 19) reflects a relationship between this text and apocalyptic eschatology. The *Psalms of Solomon* draw on the biblical tradition of seeing a foreign conqueror both as sent by God to judge his people and, at the same time, subject to imminent judgment on the basis of his insolence/arrogance.⁴⁴ They critique and criticise the current Jewish rulers, while at the same time providing criticism of the foreign rulers who have taken their place, a similar dynamic to the *Similitudes of Enoch*. Pompey (the arrogant sinner of *Pss. Sol.* 2) judges the sinful rulers of Jerusalem, but is also killed in Egypt as just desserts for his desecration of the temple (2:26). Similarly, the beginning of *Psalms of Solomon* 17 criticises the Hasmoneans, who are justly judged by Pompey (or by God through Pompey) (vv. 5-10).⁴⁵ Pompey, however, is also described as ‘the lawless one,’ who arrogantly destroys Jerusalem and so becomes liable for judgment. At this point, the author calls for the messiah to come and judge the foreign rulers who currently control Jerusalem. A royal Davidic messianism forms the background for this figure.

As well as the ‘χριστός’ title, the *Psalms of Solomon* explicitly note the Davidic descent of the agent (17:21). The messiah figure clearly has ‘political’ functions to carry out. The author asks God to ‘Undergird him with the strength to destroy the unrighteous rulers, to purge Jerusalem from gentiles who trample her to destruction’ (17:22). The description of his judgment is given in metaphorical terms, whereby the godless nations are destroyed ‘with the word of his mouth’ (17:24), but the political and historical dimensions remain important. Later, in *Psalms of Solomon* seventeen,

⁴⁴ For an example of the former idea, see Isa 45:1-4.

⁴⁵ Pompey is conventionally identified as the figure behind the ‘lawless one’; Oegema, *Anointed*, 103-108. A recent attempt to argue that *Ps. Sol.* 17 refers to Herod the Great is made by Atkinson, *Intertextual*, 358-368. If accepted, Atkinson’s theory would change the historical referents of the vision, but would not effect a major claim that the depiction of a messiah figure here acts in hostility to current rulers.

the heathens come to serve under the yoke of the Messiah and the messiah will rule (17:32ff.).⁴⁶ The messiah through these chapters is clearly connected to God's rule. Thus, the messiah is characterised as a 'righteous king, taught of God' (17:35), and the 'Lord Himself is his king' (17:38). The Psalm ends with the declaration that 'The Lord Himself is our king for ever and ever', emphasising the subservience of the messiah to the Lord. *Psalms of Solomon* eighteen continues this theme. Thus, the 'goodness of the Lord' sends the anointed one, whose purpose is to 'direct (every) man in the works of righteousness by the fear of the Lord' (18:19). This warrior-king also has a teaching function. The emphasis is on the action of God in calling the messiah for a particular purpose, and not on the agent himself.⁴⁷ Wright notes that the Psalms of Solomon call for a rebellion against government, in which, 'Unlike the cryptic language of other apocalyptic literature, the criticism and challenge are open and unveiled.'⁴⁸ The depiction of the messiah as a warrior, as well as a teacher, is a feature of this critique.

As part of its eschatological hope, the Qumran community believed, at least in some stages of its development, in two messiahs.⁴⁹ The dual messianism is expressed in the phrase, 'the messiahs of Aaron and Israel' (1QS 9, 10-11; CD 12:22-23; 13:20-22). The Messianic Rule refers to these messiahs at the eschatological meal of the community (1QSa 2:11-23). The messiah of Aaron, the priestly messiah, is described as the 'head of the great congregation of Israel' and enters first into the assembly with his priests. Only then does the 'messiah of Israel' enter, followed by the chiefs of Israel in order of their status. In the blessing of the bread and wine, the priest also precedes the 'messiah of Israel', indicating his priority. The priority of the 'messiah of Aaron' over the 'messiah of Israel' reflects the priestly consciousness of the community. It also finds precedent in the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, in

⁴⁶ Wright also points out the importance of the title 'Lord Messiah' (17:28) which is drawn on in NT Christology; "Psalms of Solomon", 646-647.

⁴⁷ De Jong, M., "The Use of 'Anointed' in the Time of Jesus," *NovT* 8 (1966), 133-137.

⁴⁸ Wright, "Psalms of Solomon," 647.

⁴⁹ For discussion of the texts and issues, see Karl Georg Kuhn, "The Two Messiahs of Aaron and Israel," in *The Scrolls and the New Testament*, ed., Kirister Stendahl (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1958), 54-64; Shemaryahu Talmon, "Waiting for the Messiah: The Spiritual Universe of the Qumran Covenants," in *Judaisms and their Messiahs at the Turn of the Christian Era*, ed., Jacob Neusner, William Scott Green and Ernest S. Frerichs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 111-137; Collins, *Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 71-90.

which a priestly messiah appears to be above the royal messiah (*T. Rub.* 6:7-12; *T. Levi* 17:2-3).⁵⁰

The variety of texts at Qumran, their fragmented state, and the variety of possible interpretations make it unwise to force all of the Dead Sea texts dealing with eschatology into a single scheme. As Chester notes, 'It is not possible to present a single, homogeneous Qumran messianic belief without doing violence to the nature of the evidence.'⁵¹ It seems certain, however, that the Qumran community believed, at least in some stages of its development, in two messiahs. The dual messianism is expressed in the phrase, 'the messiahs of Aaron and Israel' (1QS 9.19-11; CD 12.22-23; 13.20-22).⁵² The Messianic Rule refers to these messiahs at the eschatological meal of the community (1QSa 2:11-23). The messiah of Aaron, the priestly messiah, is described as the 'head of the great congregation of Israel' and enters first into the assembly with his priests. Only then does the 'messiah of Israel' enter, followed by the chiefs of Israel in order of their status. In the blessing of the bread and wine, the priest also precedes the 'messiah of Israel', indicating his priority. The priority of the 'messiah of Aaron' over the 'messiah of Israel' reflects the priestly consciousness of the community. It also finds precedent in the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, in which a priestly messiah appears to be above the royal messiah (*T. Rub.* 6:7-12; *T. Levi* 17:2-3).⁵³

The belief in two messiahs at Qumran was probably, at least partly, a protest at the Hasmonean claim to both kingship and priesthood.⁵⁴ Thus, the claim that God would raise up two messiahs at the end-time implies that God would replace the wicked Hasmoneans who had usurped both roles. The messiah would also, of course, replace the Romans who follow them. As well as these two figures, the Qumran texts mention other eschatological figures, including the 'prophet' (1QS 9.10-11).⁵⁵ The

⁵⁰ Kuhn, "Two Messiahs," 57-58.

⁵¹ Chester, "Jewish Messianic Expectations," 25.

⁵² 1QS 9.9-11 is the only Qumran text in which two messiahs are unambiguously attested. Most interpreters, however, read the phrase, 'the messiah of Aaron and Israel' as also referring to these two messiahs. Other interpreters are less sure, including Chester, "Jewish Messianic Expectations," 21-22.

⁵³ Kuhn, "Two Messiahs," 57-58; Chester, "Jewish Messianic Expectations," 23-24.

⁵⁴ Kuhn, "Two Messiahs," 60-63; Oegema, *Anointed*, 100-101; Collins, *Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 77-80.

⁵⁵ For a discussion of the different texts, see Chester, "Jewish Messianic Expectations," 23-24.

recently published 4Q521 may refer to this eschatological prophet.⁵⁶ As well as providing a critique of the Hasmonean rulers, the material at Qumran represents another instance of eschatological-redeemer speculation in Second Temple Judaism. Although the picture of the messiah(s) is not explained in great detail at Qumran, the documents maintain the connection between the messiah(s) and the transition between the ages, reflecting their political role.

Eschatological redemption-figures in apocalyptic literature, then, are consistently associated with a political realm, insofar as they exercise functions connected with the transition from the old age to God's new era. As with apocalyptic eschatology generally, the appearance of redemption-figures is found in texts produced in times of crisis, reflecting the political context for the development of these ideas. Collins notes;

The presence or absence of messianism was primarily determined by the political attitudes and circumstances of the different groups within Judaism. Those who placed their hopes in the institutions and leaders of their day, whether the High Priests, the Ptolemies, or the Maccabees, had little interest in messianism.⁵⁷

The exceptions to this actually prove the rule. In the third book of the Sibylline Oracles (3.625-56, 767-808),⁵⁸ messianic references and eschatological allusions are connected to the rule of a contemporary Egyptian king.⁵⁹ 3:652-655 proclaims that,

God will send a King from the sun who will stop the entire earth from evil war; killing some, imposing oaths on others; and he will not do all these things by his private plans but in obedience to the teachings of the great God.

The 'king from the sun' (ἄπ' ἡλίου) is a phrase also found in the Egyptian 'Potter's Oracle', where it refers to an Egyptian king. Considering the provenance of this oracle in Egypt, it is likely that it too refers to one of the Ptolemies (probably

⁵⁶ Collins, *Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 87-89.

⁵⁷ John J. Collins, "Messianism in the Maccabean Period," in *Judaisms and their Messiahs at the Turn of the Christian Era*, ed. Jacob Neusner, William Scott Green and Ernest S. Frerichs, 97-109 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 106

⁵⁸ The third book of the Sibylline Oracles originated in Egypt, and is probably from the third century BCE; Collins, "Sibylline Oracles," 355-356.

⁵⁹ Collins, *Sibylline Oracles*, 39-44; Oegema, *Anointed*, 81-85.

Ptolemy VI).⁶⁰ Jews in Egypt probably saw the king as a great leader sent by God to redeem and protect them.⁶¹

A similar instance is found in Josephus' insistence that the prophecy of a rising leader from the east, interpreted by most Jews as referring a messiah figure who would drive out foreign rulers, actually applied to the Roman ruler Vespasian (BJ 6, 312-313). Both cases illustrate that messianic imagery could be used ideologically to support foreign rule over Jews (in Israel or in the Diaspora). This hints that the normal function and application of eschatology and redemption-figures was, at least partly, as a critique of present rulers.

Evidence for the influence of eschatological redemption-figures in Jewish resistance movements shows that ideological critique could also transform into social resistance. In chapter two, we considered evidence that messianic figures were active in the first century. Reading between the lines of Josephus' work, it seems likely that many of those he dismisses as bandits (λησται) were fuelled by apocalyptic hopes. The most explicit evidence comes from Josephus' record of a Jewish oracle (BJ 6, 312-313), also found in Tacitus (*Hist.* 5, 12), which the rebels of the Jewish War read messianically. Messianic claims were consistently treated with hostility by the Romans, for the obvious reason that most 'messiahs' claimed to be God's rulers over Israel. The authorities also executed Jesus as a messiah figure, despite the differences between his movement and other 'messianic' movements, indicating their hostility to any who would claim continuity with Jewish kingship.⁶² It is significant that eschatological redemption figures become less important in the work of the rabbis who, having seen the consequences of rebellion against Rome, gave less significance

⁶⁰ Collins, *Sibylline Oracles*, 44. Chester queries whether the oracle uses the phrase to refer to a king from the east (like the LXX), and so possibly a Jewish messiah, though confesses uncertainty; Chester, "Jewish Messianic Expectations," 34-37. The Egyptian provenance of the oracle, and the nature of the *Sib. Or.* as a whole, make the Ptolemaic reference almost certain.

⁶¹ Note, however, that connecting messianic hopes to an Egyptian ruler is not wholly subservient to such a ruler, as in this case the ruler is believed to bring in the new era (when God would reign).

⁶² The most persuasive evidence for this is of course the plaque above the cross announcing Jesus as 'king of the Jews' (Mark 15:26; Matt 27:37; John 19:19), a detail unlikely to have been invented by the evangelists. Though the claim remains contentious, many scholars also claim that Jesus saw himself as messiah, cf., Richard N. Longenecker, *The Christology of Early Jewish Christianity*, SBT, ed. C.F.D. Moule et al. (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1970), 70-74; N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, Christian Origins and the Question of God, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 489-510, 528-538.

to an idea that was inherently political.⁶³ Although the ‘messiah’ appears within rabbinic literature, the sense of imminence and challenge to the status quo found so pervasively within apocalyptic literature is drastically softened.

The evidence for redemption-figures, illustrated by the material gathered here, shows that diverse expectations were connected with the end-time. Although we have looked only at literature which includes eschatological redemption-figures, it is important to note that most of the apocalypses do not refer to end-time redemption-figures. When redemption-figures are involved, they are associated with the time before the end, the end itself, or a time between the end and God’s future paradise (the ‘messianic kingdom’). Despite the diversity of notions connected with redemption figures, they are political insofar as they are connected to the end of this age and the beginning of the new. Even when redemption figures are described in heavenly, transcendent categories, these characteristics do not make them any less ‘political’ than the more familiar ‘nationalistic’ and military figures.

The Apocalypse of God’s Redeemer in Romans

Paul’s view of Christ as God’s eschatological redeemer was grounded in his belief that God had raised Jesus from the dead (Rom 1:3-4; 4:24; 6:4; 8:11; 1 Cor 15:1-57; Phil 2:9). Although the resurrection of a crucified redemption-figure was without precedent in Judaism, the connection between the general resurrection and eschatology led Paul to associate Jesus’ resurrection with the transition between the ages. Christ’s eschatological agency thus became the foundation for the diverse metaphors and images used for Jesus by Paul. As well as the use of ‘χριστός’ and ‘Son of God’ for Jesus, key images of Christ within Romans connect Jesus to his eschatological status; Christ as sacrifice (Rom 3:21-26); Christ as new Adam (Rom 5:12-21), and Christ as Lord (Rom 14:5-12).

The depiction of Christ as the eschatological redeemer in Romans included a political dimension in its association with the redemption-figure tradition of apocalyptic eschatology, even if specific features of Christ as redeemer were radically rethought in the light of his death and resurrection. Although the function of Paul’s Christology differs within the various texts, Paul nevertheless associated Jesus with disjunctive eschatology, the root of political dimensions inherent within

⁶³ Chester, “Jewish Messianic Expectations,” 46-47.

apocalyptic. Although some interpreters suggest that Paul depicted Jesus as a transcendent saviour rather than an earthly-political messiah, such a distinction is, as we have seen, spurious. Paul's high Christology certainly meant that Jesus was granted a greater significance than other eschatological redemption figures, but this led to a broadening of the scope of the political rather than its rejection.

Jesus' Resurrection and the Eschatological Time

As we noted in chapter two, resurrection occurred in the apocalypses as a mark of the eschatological time.⁶⁴ It signalled the end of the world and the judgment of humanity (Dan 12:1-3; 4 Ezra 7:32-37; *T. Jud.* 25; *Sib. Or.* 4.176-190), implying the end of political rulers and God's redemptive action in putting wrongs to right. As a community event, resurrection involved either all of humanity or the community of the righteous.⁶⁵ Among the early Christians, belief in the resurrection of an individual broke that communal pattern and, at the very least, signalled the significance of Christ as God's eschatological agent. It also indicated that the eschatological time had in some senses begun. Christ's resurrection represented the 'first-fruits' of a future resurrection and heralded the end of the current age. In Romans, Paul associates the resurrection of Jesus with his exaltation as well as with the future resurrection of believers. Acceptance of the resurrection constitutes part of Paul's apocalyptic world-view.

The first occurrence of resurrection language in Romans occurs in 1:3-4, part of a tradition adopted by Paul. Paul summarises his gospel 'concerning God's Son' ('περὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ') in two parallel clauses;

‘τοῦ γενομένου ἐκ σπέρματος Δαβὶδ κατὰ σάρκα,
τοῦ ὀρισθέντος υἱοῦ θεοῦ ἐν δυνάμει κατὰ πνεῦμα ἁγίωσύνῃς ἐξ
ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν’

⁶⁴ Resurrection is not, however, found through all the apocalypses. It functions to indicate the transition from the old era to the new, but this could also be depicted in other ways. On this whole question, see John J. Collins, "Apocalyptic Eschatology as the Transcendence of Death," in *Seers, Sybils and Sages in Hellenistic-Roman Judaism*, JSJSup, ed. John J. Collins (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 75-97.

⁶⁵ At the earliest stages, resurrection only involved those who had died in persecution (Dan 12:1-3). For the movements towards universalising resurrection, see Nickelsburg, *Resurrection*, esp. 174-175.

The use of parallel statements about Jesus, framed in a style and manner untypical of Paul, betrays a pre-Pauline fragment behind the text.⁶⁶ Several scholars believe that Paul added phrases to the parallel statement, and attempt to uncover the original tradition behind the text.⁶⁷ Whatever the original confession, Paul draws on a tradition to emphasise his agreement with a confession known to the Roman Christians, and so appeals to the unity with his readers as a 'credential' of his authority. In spite of, or rather because of, its adoption by Paul from tradition, we can assume that it tied in with his own theology and argument. Its importance in Romans is in its anticipation of a major theme throughout the letter; that Jesus' saving activity is predicated on his Jewish origins. As well as the Gospel being 'for the Jew first, and then for the Gentile' (1:16), it is also 'from the Jews, to the Gentiles.'⁶⁸ The best reading of these two phrases, then, is as progressive or climactic parallelism, not antithetical parallelism.⁶⁹ Although 'σάρξ' is frequently used in Paul for weak or sinful 'flesh', here, as in 9:5, it simply means 'human'.

The text as we have it connects God's appointment of Christ as 'Son of God in power' ('υἱοῦ θεοῦ ἐν δυνάμει') with his resurrection. The phrase, 'ἐξ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν' could be translated temporally (from the time of his resurrection from the dead) or causally (by means of his resurrection from the dead), depending on the sense of 'ἐξ'.⁷⁰ Whichever translation is correct, it is clear that Paul attributes a new status to Jesus on the basis of his resurrection. As Dunn puts it, 'Paul saw in the resurrection of Jesus a "becoming" of Jesus in status and role, not simply a

⁶⁶ Cranfield, *Romans I*, 57; Martin Hengel, *The Son of God: The Origin of Christology and the History of Jewish-Hellenistic Religion*, trans. John Bowden (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1976), 59-60. But see L. W. Hurtado, "Jesus' Divine Sonship in Paul's Epistle to the Romans," in *Romans and the People of God: Essays in Honor of Gordon D. Fee on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday*, ed. Sven K. Soderlund and N.T. Wright, 217-233 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999), 223.

⁶⁷ Käsemann, *Romans*, 10-12; Ferdinand Hahn, *The Titles of Jesus in Christology: Their History in Early Christianity*, Lutterworth Library, ed. James Barr et al. (London: Lutterworth Press, 1969), 246-251.

⁶⁸ Throughout the letter the salvation of gentiles is connected to the Jews. Paul's hostility to Judaizers can easily blind interpreters to this point. For Paul, the priority of the Jewish people is not simply temporal, but spiritual. This is assumed in his rebuttal of gentile-Christian arrogance in 11:17-24 and explicit in his mention of gentile Christian obligation to Jewish Christians in 15:27. See also 9:1-5.

⁶⁹ Hurtado, "Divine Sonship," 225-227; Cranfield, *Romans I*, 59-61. Contra Dunn, *Romans I-8*, 11-13, who believes that 'κατὰ σάρκα' has a negative connotation here.

⁷⁰ C. F. D. Moule, *An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 73.

ratification of a status or role already enjoyed on earth or from the beginning of time.⁷¹ The new status is not Jesus' divine sonship *per se*, however, but rather his sonship exercised 'in power.'⁷² Jesus was Son of God prior to his resurrection but received power as Son of God following it.⁷³ The plural 'νεκρῶν' points to the apocalyptic context of Jesus' resurrection.⁷⁴ Paul notes in the following verse that through the risen Christ he has received 'grace and apostleship' as apostle to the gentiles. Christ's resurrection, then, is associated with his current position as God's agent. Resurrection functions as an exaltation, positioning Christ in a position of power and authority.

As well as the opening of Romans, in which Paul assumes common acceptance of Jesus' resurrection, Paul notes the importance of resurrection-faith for salvation and Christian existence throughout his letter. In Romans 4, he considers Abraham as a Jewish 'type' of the Christian believer.⁷⁵ Paul's concern throughout this chapter is to demonstrate that this Jewish patriarch was not justified by works of the law but by faith (4:2-3). Righteousness of faith is prefigured by this Patriarch, demonstrating that Paul's gospel 'upholds the law' (3:31).⁷⁶

In Romans 4:16-25, Paul parallels Abraham's faith in the promise of descendents by God with the believer's faith in God who raised Jesus from the dead. The text, 'Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness' (Gen 15:6), is the basis for Paul's midrashic reflections throughout the chapter. Just as Abraham's faith was reckoned as righteousness, so also will righteousness, 'be reckoned to us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was handed over to death for our trespasses and was raised for our justification.' (4:24b-25).

Resurrection belief is necessary for salvation. An implicit parallel exists between Jesus' death and the barrenness of Sarah's womb, coupled with Abraham's old age.⁷⁷

⁷¹ Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 14.

⁷² That 'in power' qualifies 'Son of God' is supported by Cranfield, *Romans I*, 62; Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 14. Sanday and Headlam argue that it qualifies 'appointed', *Romans*, 9.

⁷³ The meaning of 'Son of God' here will be discussed in more detail below.

⁷⁴ Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 15-16.

⁷⁵ Stowers argues that Abrahams is not depicted as an example of saving faith, but rather as a founder of a lineage like Christ; Stowers, *Rereading of Romans*, 237-250. This, however, goes against the explicit comparison Paul draws between Abraham and believers (4:24-25).

⁷⁶ For a different use of the Abraham tradition in Paul, see Gal. 3:6-18.

⁷⁷ Paul notes that Abraham's body 'was already as good as dead' (4:19).

In both cases, God ‘gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.’ (4:17).⁷⁸ Believers share Abraham’s position, as ones to whom righteousness is reckoned, when they believe in Christ’s resurrection.

Romans 10:9 also makes belief in Christ’s resurrection, along with confession in Christ’s Lordship, the *sine qua non* of saving faith. The text is part of a broader comparison between the ‘righteousness that comes from the law’ and the ‘righteousness that comes from faith’ (Rom 10:5-13). The ‘righteousness that comes from the law’ is connected to Leviticus 18:5, ‘the person who does these things shall live by them’. Strikingly, Paul reinterprets Deuteronomy 30:11-14, which refers to the word of the law explicated by Moses, to refer to the ‘word of faith’. A text relating to the immediacy of the law is connected to the immediacy of the Gospel proclamation.⁷⁹ Paul interprets Deuteronomy 30:14, ‘the word is near you, on your lips and in your heart’ to refer to the confession (‘with your lips’) of Christ’s Lordship, and to the belief (‘in your heart’) in God’s resurrection of Christ.⁸⁰ A text based on the law has been reoriented around Christ, ‘the τέλος of the law’ (10:4). Part of this redirection involves accepting Christ’s resurrection, and so God’s eschatological vindication of him.

The significance of Jesus’ resurrection for Paul was that it signalled both that Christ was God’s eschatological agent and that the eschatological era had begun. For Paul, the new age had broken into the old. Thus, belief in Jesus’ resurrection was connected to the disjunctive eschatology of apocalyptic. The expectation of a future resurrection for believers (Rom 6:5, 8), however, implies that the consummation of the new era awaits. A tension remained between present realisation and future hope.

⁷⁸ For similarities between the faith of Abraham, believers, and Christ himself, see John L. White, *The Apostle of God: Paul and the Promise of Abraham* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1999), xxiii-xxvii.

⁷⁹ Scholars interpret this flagrant reinterpretation differently. Some believe that Paul is purely arbitrary here, violently appropriating a text for his own purposes. In contrast, Wright argues that the ‘doing of the law’ is interpreted by Paul as fulfilled in Christ (using Deut 30 to refer to the ‘return from exile’). See N.T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 244-245. For a survey of interpretations, see Thielman, *Plight to Solution*, 111-115.

⁸⁰ Humphrey argues that 10:6-8 is a polemic against mysticism and visions. Paul wants to affirm that God dwells with all people, see Edith Humphrey, “Why Bring the Word Down? The Rhetoric of Demonstration and Disclosure in Romans 9:30-10:21,” in *Romans and the People of God: Essays in Honor of Gordon D. Fee on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday*, ed. Sven K. Soderlund and N.T. Wright, 129-148 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999), 131-136.

Nevertheless, the exaltation of Jesus by God from the dead encouraged the development of images for Jesus suggestive of Christ's present reign, implicitly challenging rival claims of sovereignty (whether political or otherwise). Paul draws on the eschatological story-line of apocalyptic, depicting Christ as God's eschatological agent.

Jesus as Davidic Messiah in Romans

The depiction of the eschatological agent as a king like David, or as one of David's royal line, is associated in the apocalyptic literature with the use of 'χριστός'. 'χριστός' appears 270 times within Paul's genuine letters, over half the total number of New Testament occurrences (531).⁸¹ This suggests that Jesus' messianic status is central for Paul's theology, but in almost all cases the word functions not as a label but as part of Jesus' name, 'Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ'. The label 'χριστός' seems to have become a name by the time Paul wrote.⁸² Hints remain in Romans, however, that the messianic status of Jesus remained important. The more strictly 'messianic' belief ('messianic' because related to the term 'messiah') is indicated in other ways than by the use of 'χριστός', such as the attribution of Davidic descent or characteristics to the figure in question. Paul's allusions to Jesus as Davidic Messiah draw on one stream of eschatological speculation, though other forms of language for Christ are more prominent.

Although Paul uses 'χριστός' as a name rather than a label, the word-play in 2 Corinthians 1:21, between 'χριστός' and 'χρίσας', shows that Paul was aware of its titular sense.⁸³ This is also reflected in the absence of the combination of 'κύριος' with 'χριστός' in Paul's letters.⁸⁴ The only undeniably titular use of 'χριστός', however, occurs in Romans 9:5, where the 'messiah' of the Jews is the climax in a list of Jewish privileges. The Jewish rejection of Jesus, despite all the privileges they had been given - adoption, glory, covenants, and even the messiah - leads Paul to

⁸¹ De Jong, M., "The Earliest Christian Use of *Christos*: Some Suggestions," *NTS* 32 (1986), 321. Because of textual alternatives, this figure changes slightly in different accounts.

⁸² Werner Kramer, *Christ, Lord, Son of God*, SBT, ed. C. F. D. Moule (London: SCM Press, 1966), 203-214.

⁸³ Grundmann, *TDNT* IX (1974) 540.

⁸⁴ Thus, Paul is aware that both terms are titles and so only inappropriately put together. Martin Hengel, "'Christos' in Paul," chap. in *Between Jesus and Paul: Studies in the Earliest History of Christianity* (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1983), 68-69. Kramer, *Christ*, 214.

despair.⁸⁵ Although Paul later finds in this paradox an expression of God's grace to gentiles (11:1-36), here he expresses his anguish.⁸⁶ The 'κατὰ σάρκα' following 'Χριστός' is utilised in a neutral sense, as in Romans 1:3. Its purpose is not to contrast Jesus with a supposed 'heavenly messiah,' but simply to assert that, ethnically, the messiah was a Jew. The occurrence of messiah as the final privilege in the list indicates that he was the greatest privilege of all, as well as reflecting a chronological progression. There is, of course, great discussion on the relationship between the messiah and God in vs. 5.⁸⁷ What is clear is that the praise to God follows the naming of the messiah, further suggesting his significance for Paul's Christology.

Wright has recently questioned the consensus view that 'Χριστός' is titular in Paul,⁸⁸ arguing that it retains the meaning of 'messiah'. For Wright, Paul uses the term to denote the messiah as representative of the people of God.⁸⁹ He points out, rightly, that the appearance of 'Χριστός' within Paul is characteristic of specific contexts. Certain prepositions, for instance, are used with 'Χριστός' which are not usually used for 'Ἰησοῦς'.⁹⁰ The best explanation for this, in Wright's view, is that Paul uses 'Χριστός' in a consistent messianic, and representative, sense. His reading rests on his argument that the representative sense of the messiah was taken for granted within Judaism.⁹¹ Although a representative sense is in some cases present, however, it cannot be demonstrated in all, or even most of, the uses of 'Χριστός'. The messiahs of Qumran, for instance, do not represent the people of God in an

⁸⁵ Sanday and Headlam note, 'it is because of the great contrast suggested between the destiny of Israel and their actual condition that his grief is so profound,' *Romans*, 232.

⁸⁶ He also points out to gentile readers that the refusal of most Israelites to accept the gospel message is a cause for prayer and humility, not for boasting.

⁸⁷ Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 233-238; Cranfield, *Romans II*, 464-470; Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, 528-529.

⁸⁸ Titular, that is, apart from one or two exceptions.

⁸⁹ Wright, 'Χριστός as Messiah in Paul: Philemon 6', in *Climax of the Covenant*, 41-55.

⁹⁰ For a list of these prepositions with the names for Jesus, see Wright, *Climax of the Covenant*, 44-45.

⁹¹ Wright appeals to the incorporative idea inherent within kingship (2 Sam 19:40-43; 20:1) as providing a 'matrix of ideas' out of which an incorporative sense could be associated with the Messiah in the first century, *Climax*, 46-47.

incorporative way. Wright allows an incorporative notion of kingship to control his reading of 'χριστός' in Paul.⁹²

A more likely reason for the use of 'χριστός' in specific contexts, given by Kramer, is that the term was associated with specific contexts in the pre-Pauline period and that Paul merely drew on this traditional association and reflected on its significance.⁹³ Originally, according to Kramer, the label 'χριστός' was connected to what he calls a '*pistis* formula', involving the proclamation of Jesus' death and resurrection.⁹⁴ Paul frequently uses 'χριστός' in such a context. Other contexts in which Paul uses the name take their basis as a reflection on the original '*pistis* formula'. Although 'χριστός' usually has little 'messianic' significance, aside from Romans 10:9, other passages in Romans indicate that Paul connects the tradition of Davidic messiah with Jesus.

Romans 1:3-4 is again a key text. Paul attributes Davidic descent and divine sonship to Jesus. The only significance of Davidic descent, which occurs in the first phrase of the paralleled pair, is in its warrant for considering Jesus as messiah. The parallel phrases, as we argued earlier, represent a climactic progression rather than an antitheses. Jesus' Davidic descent, then, is the precursor to his declaration as Son of God. One strand of Jewish messianic speculation regarded descent of David as necessary for the eschatological redeemer, who was depicted in this tradition as a ruler like David (Ps 89:3f; Isa 11:1; *Pss. Sol.* 17:21f; Mark 12:35-37).⁹⁵ Only a descendent of David could fulfil the messianic mandate of 2 Sam 7:12-14. In associating Jesus with a Jewish king, whose descendants were a focus for the hope of national liberation, Paul adopted this stream of eschatological reflection for his depiction of Christ.

As well as the mention of Christ as a descendent of David, the second clause of Romans 1:3-4 describes Jesus as 'Son of God'. Further, the confession is introduced

⁹² Wright also argues that this reading makes better sense of the texts, but the equation of 'Χριστός' with 'People of God' needs much further justification from the Jewish background.

⁹³ Kramer, *Christ*, 133-150.

⁹⁴ Kramer, *Christ*, 63-64.

⁹⁵ Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 6-7; Cranfield, *Romans I*, 58-59.

by Paul with the phrase, 'concerning his son'.⁹⁶ The proximity between the mention of Jesus' sonship and his descent of David, and the climactic parallelism here at work, makes it likely that 'Son of God' has its messianic associations here. Although 'Son of God' could be associated with other strands of eschatological speculation, it was often connected with the Davidic messiah. The king was one of the few First Testament figures who was described as God's Son (2 Sam 7:14; Ps 2:7), and so the concept came to be applied to the Davidic Messiah (1QSa 2:11ff; 4Qflo 1-10).⁹⁷ The notion of the king as God's son ('my son') in Ps 2:7ff was interpreted as messianic within rabbinic Judaism and other Jewish texts imply the Messiah is God's son (4 Ezra, 1 Enoch 37-71, though both are late; 4Qflor; 1QSa 11, 11; *Pss. Sol.* 17:21).⁹⁸ The use of the title for Jesus may have also been an extension of memories that Jesus addressed God as 'Abba'.⁹⁹ The definite article connected with Jesus as Son of God is significant; Jesus is not simply *a* son of God, but *the* son of God.¹⁰⁰ Jesus' divine sonship is probably emphasised in the beginning of the letter because of its soteriological significance:¹⁰¹ Jesus' connection to God as son transcends the Jewish-Gentile division and broadens the Gospel announcement into a message for all. Romans 1:9, in which the Gospel is characterised as the 'Gospel of his Son' adds weight to a soteriological reading of the phrase.

Paul also applies a number of prophecies to Jesus which are drawn from texts associated with the coming messiah. In Romans 9:33, Paul quotes passages from Isaiah (Isa 28:16; 8:14). The use of 'stone' to refer to Jesus is picked up elsewhere in the New Testament (Mark 12:10; Acts 4:11; 1 Pet 2:4). Although in Isaiah, the

⁹⁶ Jesus' divine sonship is also mentioned in 1:9, as part of Paul's thanksgiving. The phrase, 'concerning his son', is probably best explained as elicited by the thought that Jesus was Messiah, with his Davidic descent mentioned in the first clause; Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 8-9.

⁹⁷ James D. G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making: An Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation*, 2nd (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1989), 15-16; Hengel, *Son of God*, 63-64. See later in this chapter for further associations connected with divine sonship.

⁹⁸ Hahn, *Titles*, 279-284.

⁹⁹ Hengel, *Son of God*, 63-64. Hahn proposes an evolving understanding of Son of God in Jewish and Hellenistic Christian circles (*Titles*, 284-289), but see Hengel for a criticism of christological developments based on a division between Jewish and Hellenistic Christianity; Martin Hengel, "Christology and New Testament Chronology. A Problem in the History of Earliest Christianity," in *Between Jesus and Paul: Studies in the Earliest History of Christianity* (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1983), 30-47.

¹⁰⁰ Hengel, *Son of God*, 8-9; Hurtado, 'Sonship,' 225.

¹⁰¹ Hurtado, 'Sonship,' 227-228.

‘stumbling stone’ refers to salvation, in later Jewish literature and in the New Testament itself ‘λίθος’ was interpreted messianically.¹⁰² In Romans 11:26-27, a quote from Isaiah 59:20-21a is stitched to one from Isaiah 10:26-27, both reflected in the LXX translation. Interestingly ‘ἐνεκεν Σιῶν’ from the LXX is replaced with ‘ἐκ Σιῶν’ by Paul, perhaps drawing from Psalm 13:7 or 52:7.¹⁰³ The prepositional phrase ‘ἐκ Σιῶν’ was probably chosen because of the tradition that places the origin of the messiah’s work in Jerusalem (Isa 2:2ff; Mic 4:1f).¹⁰⁴ A messianic interpretation of these texts is also found in the rabbinical literature (*t.Sanh.* 98.9a).¹⁰⁵ Paul’s use of ‘ῥυόμενος’ for the returning Jesus in 1 Thessalonians 1:10 suggests that Jesus is also in view here. Finally, a number of prophecies relating to gentile worship of the one God follow the notice that Christ was a ‘servant to the circumcised’ in Romans 15:8. The argument is directed both to Jews, to realise that the scriptures promise the gentiles acceptance as well, and to gentiles, to realise that their salvation comes through the Jews.¹⁰⁶ The prophecies end with Isaiah 11:10 (LXX); ‘the root of Jesse shall come, the one who rises to rule the Gentiles.’ (15:12). ‘The root of Jesse’ here refers to a descendent of David and is understood in the tradition messianically.¹⁰⁷ This later quotation is particularly important because Paul draws a patently political text that relates to the messiah into his depiction of Jesus as the eschatological redeemer.¹⁰⁸ Although the passage is integrated into the tradition of Jesus, and applied to Christ’s rule over the community, it would be wrong to argue that Paul has completely depoliticised the passage. Paul has certainly demilitarised the tradition, but the political reality of the messiah’s rulership remains.

Paul draws attention to Jesus as messiah at the beginning of Romans and twice in his discussion of God’s faithfulness to Israel. In the later context, messianic concepts would naturally arise; but their appearance at the beginning of a letter for gentile

¹⁰² Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 281; Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, 584.

¹⁰³ Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 336-337.

¹⁰⁴ Stuhlmacher, *Romans*, 170-172.

¹⁰⁵ Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 337; Cranfield, *Romans II*, 578.

¹⁰⁶ Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 397.

¹⁰⁷ Cranfield, *Romans II*, 746-747.

¹⁰⁸ Isaiah 10:20-12:16 deals with the period following the Lord’s punishment of Assyria. Associated with the period will be the gathering of the people (11:11-13) and their rule over foreign nations (11:14-16). The picture is of political rule, even if language connected with it includes a pastiche of colourful images (11:1-5).

Christians suggests that Paul wanted his readers to acknowledge the essential Jewishness of Jesus. Paul associates Jesus with aspects of the messianic ideal because Jesus' messianic status was an important aspect of his 'service to the circumcised', on which was predicated Gentile peace with God. By associating Jesus with the tradition of Davidic messianism, Paul connected Jesus with a concept known as 'political' by the Romans and many Jews. Christ, descended from David, was the 'root from Jesse' who had come to rule the world. Rome was familiar with other messiah-figures and, as we have seen, punished and persecuted those associated with them. The associations of messiahs with the overthrow of Roman rule, and the social and revolutionary movements led by messianic figures, meant that such a concept was a dangerous one to retain. More importantly, Paul's depiction of Jesus as Davidic messiah reveals Jesus as God's eschatological agent, appealing to the eschatological story-line of apocalyptic.

Although the conceptual overtones of 'messiah' were rare in Romans, their presence would contribute to political suspicion of the early Christians. Jesus as Davidic messiah is not the main christological motif within Romans, but its presence is significant. Gentile Christians, drawn into the linguistic and conceptual world of Judaism, were unlikely to have been ignorant of its political implications and resonance.

Christ as Sacrifice: Romans 3:21-26

Paul's portrayal of Jesus as Davidic messiah is his most overt depiction of Christ as eschatological redeemer, but other images that he uses throughout Romans also connect Jesus' status to the eschatological period. Although these other images in Romans are not all found in the apocalyptic literature, they retain continuity with apocalyptic eschatology by their connection with the eschatological era. Precisely in associating Jesus with the eschatological period, they take on the political connotations found in the apocalyptic literature.

Paul describes Jesus' role in sacrificial terms in Romans 3:21-26. He depicts God's righteous activity in Christ as an apocalyptic event in which God affects redemption through Christ's death. Following his demonstration of the ubiquity of sin (1:18-3:20), Paul deals with the nature of God's righteousness in the present time. Cranfield describes this section as, 'the centre and heart of the whole of Rom 1.16b-

15:13.¹⁰⁹ Longenecker, on the other hand, believes that this text is part of a broader section of (Jewish Christian) material which Paul shares in common with the believers. He argues that Paul takes time to establish his agreement with the believers before introducing new ideas in chapters 5-8, which are the real centre of the letter.¹¹⁰ A position between these two positions is probably best. The text represents a significant turn in the argument, from human failure to divine grace in Christ, but its compact nature suggests it is not the main point of Paul's letter.

The dense language within this text makes it difficult to understand. Most interpreters agree that Paul quotes from tradition in Romans 3:25-26 (on the basis of the many *hapax legomena* within these verses).¹¹¹ Nevertheless, Paul accepts and supplements this tradition. The apocalyptic context of Paul's discussion and the meaning he gives to Jesus' death lends the passage a political weight.

The depiction of Christ's death in Romans 3:21-26 is given a definite eschatological horizon.¹¹² The 'ὡν δὲ' indicates a temporal progression from the period depicted in the preceding section. More significantly, Paul announces that God's righteousness ('δικαιοσύνη Θεοῦ') is disclosed in the Gospel. Romans 3:21 parallels Romans 1:18, with the verb 'πεφάνερωται' replacing 'ἀποκαλύπτεται'. The disclosure of God's righteousness refers to God's eschatological fulfilment of his covenantal faithfulness.¹¹³ Here in Romans 3:21-22, the eschatological manifestation of God's covenant faithfulness is achieved through the faithfulness of Christ unto death.¹¹⁴

God's righteousness is also mentioned in the final verses of this passage. God's redemptive activity in Christ functions as a 'demonstration of his [God's]

¹⁰⁹ Cranfield, *Romans I*, 199.

¹¹⁰ Longenecker, "Focus of Romans," 59-61, 65-69.

¹¹¹ Interpreters disagree, however, whether the tradition Paul incorporates is found in 3:25-26a or 3:24-26a. See Reumann's survey of positions; Reumann, *Righteousness*, 36-38. See also Käsemann, *Romans*, 92; Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 163-164. For the argument that Paul is not quoting tradition here, see Campbell, *Rhetoric of Righteousness*, 37-57.

¹¹² On Rom 3:23, Käsemann comments, 'Paul does not use the vocabulary of Jewish apocalyptic here, because the future world has already begun as he sees it; nevertheless he takes up the same motifs'. *Romans*, 94.

¹¹³ See the earlier discussion of 'δικαιοσύνη Θεοῦ' in chap. 2. For righteousness terminology within this text, see Campbell, *Rhetoric of Righteousness*, 138-156, and his support of reading it 'righteousness of God' in terms of God's relational salvation, 156-165.

¹¹⁴ For this reading of 'πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ', see below.

righteousness in that he has passed over the sins formally committed' (3:25). Older treatments took 'righteousness' here in a juridical sense, as distributive justice, thus constructing a satisfaction theory of the atonement (Christ's death has satisfied God's demand of punishment for sin). However, if God's righteousness maintains the meaning found throughout Paul's letters and other Jewish literature, then the demonstration of God's righteousness refers to the fulfilment of his faithfulness to his covenant and creation (in dealing with sin). The expression 'ἐνδείξιν τῆς δικαιοσύνης αὐτοῦ' is repeated in 3:26, and connected with the present era, in which God shows himself as righteous and the one justifying those who follow the faith of Christ Jesus. The phrase 'ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ' indicates a new era in which God's promises are fulfilled. The expression of God's righteousness in the death of Christ is indicative of the transition between the sinful past and hopeful future, though a provisional period between the two remains.

Paul's depiction of God's eschatological activity differs radically from conventional apocalyptic works. Rather than conceiving it in terms of national deliverance from foreign enemies, Paul centres redemption, surprisingly, astoundingly, in the death of Jesus. In his life of obedience unto death, Jesus was faithful before God. The righteousness of God works precisely through Christ's faithful obedience to death in effecting redemption (3:22-25). This subjective reading of 'πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ' makes sense within the context of Paul's argument.¹¹⁵ It avoids the redundancy present if this expression refers to 'faith in Jesus Christ' (as its result 'for all those believing' immediately follows), and hints that Christ's own faithfulness was crucial for God's redemptive action, allowing this text a certain cohesion with Romans 5:12-21. As Williams puts it, 'by his faith/obedience Christ opens up a new mode of existence which allows all nations to stand, justified, before God.'¹¹⁶ If the reference here is subjective, then the mention of God making righteous those 'ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ' (3:26) probably also refers to Christ's active behaviour. Christ acts as an agent of God's redemptive activity.

¹¹⁵ The subjective reading of this phrase is supported by Richard B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: An Investigation of the Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1-4:11*, SBLDS, (Chico, California: Scholars Press, 1983), 171-174; Williams, "Righteousness," 272-276. A defence of the 'objective reading' is found in Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 178-183. Cf., older treatments of this text, which also prefer an 'objective genitive' here.

¹¹⁶ Williams, "Righteousness," 276

Although Christ's faithfulness is referred to in this text, the focus is on God in 'putting forward' Jesus as an 'ἱλαστήριον'. God accepts Christ's faithfulness by treating his death as a means of redemption.¹¹⁷ In the depiction of Christ's death in 3:24-25, Paul adopts an earlier Christian formula, although adapting it somewhat with phrases of his own.¹¹⁸ The term 'ἱλαστήριον', a Pauline *hapax legomenon*, is connected in the Hebrew Scriptures to the sacrificial cult (Lev 16:13-15; Exod 25:17). Various translations have been proposed, including 'place of atonement',¹¹⁹ 'expiation',¹²⁰ and 'propitiation'. Although the exact meaning of the term is disputed, it clearly characterises Jesus' death as the means by which sin is taken away.¹²¹ In 3:25, the verb 'προέθετο' is used to describe God's 'offering' of Jesus as sacrifice. The word can also be translated 'purpose',¹²² but the term 'set forth' is preferred by most commentators.¹²³ Paul perhaps intended deliberate ambiguity in this; but if the sense of God 'setting forth' Christ is present, then this would be an allusion to the 'setting forth' of Christ upon the cross. Paul's view of Jesus' death as 'ἱλαστήριον', then, depicts God as directing Christ's death at the eschatological time.¹²⁴

The soteriological significance of Christ's death is predicated on its eschatological import. Paul indicates that Christ's death was the action of God in fulfilling his redemptive purpose, and so belongs to the end-time narrative of apocalyptic

¹¹⁷ For a protest against reading this text in 'sacrificial' terms, see Stowers, *Rereading of Romans*, 206-213. Stowers' alternative reading to this text suggests Christ's faithfulness to God's righteousness (God's salvific power) leads Christ to die rather than bring in the messianic era (which would condemn gentiles and most Jews). Although Stowers criticises other interpreters for reading into the text, there is no direct NT evidence at all for his own theory of the 'messiah who delays', whereas sacrificial imagery for Christ is at least found elsewhere in the NT and Paul. Stowers also directs criticism against the 'vicarious atonement' theory, but most scholars who accept a sacrificial reading of Rom 3:21-26 offer more sophisticated readings than this, e.g., Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 166-183; Campbell, *Rhetoric of Righteousness*, 102-137.

¹¹⁸ Dunn, *Romans 1*, 163-164; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 342-343.

¹¹⁹ Stuhlmacher, *Romans*, 59-60.

¹²⁰ Käsemann, *Romans*, 97.

¹²¹ Dodd, *Romans*, 54-55.

¹²² Cranfield, *Romans 1*, 208-210. Campbell, *Rhetoric of Righteousness*, 134-137.

¹²³ Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 349.

¹²⁴ Just as the Gospel writers play on the ambiguity of the word for betrayal, referring both to the Jews 'handing over' Jesus and to God's ultimate 'handing over' him to death, here the one who really 'set forth' Christ upon a cross was God.

eschatology. For Paul, and early Christian tradition, Christ's death removed sin and accomplished redemption for humanity.

As well as its eschatological significance, the nature of Christ's death was politically significant. Christ had died neither a natural death nor a noble death, but had been put to death on the cross, in the most humiliating way possible. Paul refers to the offence of crucifixion in his statement that the cross was a 'stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles' (1 Cor 1:23). For the Jews, crucifixion was a 'stumbling block' ('σκάνδαλον') because their tradition claimed that those who died on a cross were condemned by God.¹²⁵ For gentiles, it was 'foolishness' because the association of deity with suffering was nonsensical.¹²⁶ Both groups, however, would also recognise that the Romans reserved punishment by crucifixion for criminals of the lowest classes, involving the most humiliating and painful punishment possible.¹²⁷

The association of crucifixion with criminality lent the cross a political weight. Crucifixion acted as a deterrent to other criminals by displaying the bloody (tortured) body on the cross, a target of abuse and disdain by passers-by.¹²⁸ Would-be criminals were warned that they could face such a death if caught. Hengel notes that it was used as a punishment for treason, as an instrument of war and as a means of controlling provincial rebels.¹²⁹ Elliott describes its use on a large-scale as, 'primarily an instrument of public terrorism.'¹³⁰ Those condemned on the cross were condemned by rulers as a threat to the state.

The figure at the centre of early Christian devotion had been crucified as a common criminal, making the crucifixion, 'one of the most unequivocally political events recorded in the New Testament.'¹³¹ By connecting God's activity with the death of Jesus, Paul subverted the conventional cultural and political associations around crucifixion. The death of Christ became a means to life. For both Jews and gentiles,

¹²⁵ This reading of Deut 21:22-23 is reflected in Gal 3:13 as well as in Qumran texts.

¹²⁶ There are no real parallels found in the 'mystery religions' of a figure within recent history rising from the dead, or suffering such a harsh punishment.

¹²⁷ Martin Hengel, *Crucifixion in the Ancient World and the Folly of the Message of the Cross*, trans. John Bowden (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1977), 33-38.

¹²⁸ Hengel, *Crucifixion*, 22-32.

¹²⁹ Hengel, *Crucifixion*, 46-50.

¹³⁰ Elliott, *Liberating Paul*, 95.

¹³¹ Elliott, *Liberating Paul*, 93.

the exaltation of one crucified transformed their understanding of God, as one who identifies and exalts the cursed. As Georgi puts it, 'The cross of Christ has transformed heaven as well as earth.'¹³²

As well as identifying Christ's past crucifixion as a sphere of God's activity, Paul calls for believers in Romans 6 to participate in Jesus' death in their present life. The words of Jesus calling for believers to carry their cross may have influenced such a tradition, but Paul's view of participation in Christ's death goes clearly beyond this. The word 'crucify' occurs in its compound form in verse six ('συνσταυρόω'), where Christians are invited to see themselves as 'crucified with' Christ. For them, Christ's death has become a 'crucifixion of sins'. In Romans 7:4, participation in Christ's death also becomes death to the Law. Jesus' death on the cross becomes an event which frees followers of Jesus from sin and the law. The previous chapter argued that the referents of 'sin' and 'law' included historical and political dimensions, because of the apocalyptic context within which Paul interpreted them. The efficacy of participation in Christ's death indicates it was not simply the death of an individual on the cross, but the end of the old aeon and, with his resurrection, the beginning of the new. For Paul, Christ's death, 'truly constitutes the eschatological judgment of the powers.'¹³³

At the core of Paul's christological reflection was a Jew crucified by the Romans. Jesus' death was interpreted by Paul, along with the other early Christians, as God's activity in the world, an action which begins the end of the old age and heralds the new. Paul plots Jesus' death on the eschatological time-line of apocalyptic, even though his depiction of the redeemer as suffering death and rising again has no precedent within that tradition. Paul also associated believers with Christ's death. Only by participation in the death of Christ could believers look forward to life with Christ (Rom 6:1-11). Although Paul does not draw attention to it, Christ's death would be a cause of political as well as social scandal. By focusing his Christology on a Jewish rebel crucified by Roman authorities, Paul associated Jesus with criminals, slaves and rebels. The eschatological framework in which it was placed also indicated its association with the end of the age and the beginning of the new

¹³² Georgi, *Theocracy*, 22. For a description of how Jesus' resurrection 'desecrates heaven itself', see pp. 20-22.

¹³³ Beker, *Paul the Apostle*, 190; See also Elliott, *Liberating Paul*, 113.

era. Its historical associations, as well as the specifically apocalyptic function it is granted by Paul, lent the death of Christ a political significance in Romans.

Christ as New Adam: Romans 5:12-21

Whereas Paul dealt with Jesus' death in Romans 3:21-26, his depiction of Jesus in Romans 5:12-21 connects Jesus with life. Jesus is depicted as the new Adam, the start of a new humanity. This passage was discussed in the previous chapter, where we noted that sin and death are given apocalyptic and cosmic features. Described in terms associated with earthly rulers, sin and death function as God's real enemies in this text. Their mystical, cosmic dimension does not mean that they have no significance for earthly, political reality. Rather, earthly reality is enslaved to sin. Although the contrast between Adam and an eschatological redeemer is not found within the apocalyptic literature,¹³⁴ it takes on apocalyptic connotations because Paul associates Adam and Christ with different eras of human existence. As Dunn puts it, 'Paul presents the history of humanity as a drama in two parts - two epochs dominated by the two figures, Adam the tragic hero, and Christ the redeemer hero.'¹³⁵

In this Adam-Christ contrast, Paul places the issues already discussed within a broader context, affirming that reconciliation with God became possible because the life and abundant grace which flowed from Christ more than met the need of the death and sin introduced by Adam. Although the abstract character of Paul's comparison could suggest that the depiction of Christ is far removed from historical and political reality, its political significance consists in the apocalyptic framework and the character of life granted by Christ. Christ is again associated with a new era which replaces the old, recalling the apocalyptic narrative, and the life introduced by Christ is associated with the life of believers.

Paul frames his comparison between Adam and Christ against the background of the Genesis narrative, interpreting Adam's state before the fall as one of perfection and

¹³⁴ Dunn suggests that the Adam-Christ contrast arose in early Christianity partly as a result of reflections on Psalm 110:1; *Romans 1-8*, 277-279.

¹³⁵ Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 288. Cf., Cousar, 'a feature of the apocalyptic structure [in Rom 5] is the world-embracing character of both Adam and Christ.' Charles B. Cousar, "Continuity and Discontinuity: Reflections on Romans 5-8 (In Conversation with Frank Thielman)," in *Pauline Theology, Volume III: Romans*, ed., David M. Hay and E. Elizabeth Johnson, 196-210 (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 203.

free obedience. In the garden, Adam was without sin (Rom 5:12), able to freely choose whether or not to serve God. His subsequent disobedience released sin and death into the world (Rom 5:12, 15ff). Although the idea of 'original sin' should not be read into the text, Paul argues that Adam introduced a pattern which became ubiquitous for those following him.¹³⁶ Many of the apocalypses, in contrast, connect the origin of sin to an angelic rebellion preceding the flood, in which angels mated with humans and produced offspring, and also introduced humanity to ways of sinning.¹³⁷ Paul's reading of Genesis, however, also finds parallels in other Jewish texts.¹³⁸ Paul probably adopted this perspective on sin by looking at his Jewish heritage from the perspective of the Christ event.¹³⁹ He radicalises, however, a tradition that already held Jews to have come under sin.

In his comparison between Adam and Christ, Paul depicts Jesus succeeding where Adam failed.¹⁴⁰ Whereas Adam's disobedience introduced sin and death into the world (Rom 5:12, 15, 18), Christ's obedience led to righteousness and life (Rom 5:15-17, 18, 19, 21). In contrast to Adam, who was in the world before sin, Christ entered the world 'in the likeness of sinful flesh' (Rom 8:3). Christ was born into the old aeon, in which sin reigned, but he did not in fact participate in its structures. Jesus faced a world in which the powers of sin and death were at their height and faced them with the grace and gift of God. By the comparison of Christ to Adam, the apocalyptic significance of Jesus' death is made clear. Just as Adam began a new humanity, so Jesus begins a new humanity orientated around him. Adam and Christ introduced two different periods within history. Through the actions of Adam, sin and death entered the world, whereas the obedience of Christ inaugurated the new aeon, allowing grace and God's gift to abound to all. Christ's eschatological role

¹³⁶ See chap. 3.

¹³⁷ E.g., *1 Enoch* 7-8

¹³⁸ This is assumed in, e.g., *2 Apoc. Bar.* 56:5-7 which lists what was introduced by Adam's fall.

¹³⁹ Scholars rightly point out that the crisis of the destruction of Jerusalem probably influenced *4 Ezra* and *2 Baruch* in their depiction of Adam. Similarly, the Christ event caused a crisis in Paul's own religious understanding, leading him to embrace the view that sin originated with Adam and was ubiquitous.

¹⁴⁰ Wright argues that Adam was connected in Jewish literature/thought to Israel, which was seen as God's true humanity. By connecting Jesus with the figure of Adam, Paul intends to depict Christ as the representative of Israel (and so of humanity), fulfilling its task. Wright, *Climax*, 18-40. Paul never clearly makes this equation between 'Christ' and 'Israel' and it is not necessarily implied in Paul's use of 'Christ' terminology. However, Paul does see Jesus as succeeding where Israel failed.

raises the question of the significance of other leaders and rulers in the world known to the recipients of his letter.

The significance of Adam and Christ, however, is not *simply* that they initiated periods within *Heilsgeschichte*. The notion of participation is also central here, as we noted in chapter three. As well as beginning the old aeon of sin and the new one of grace, Adam and Christ represent paradigms and stories within which unbelievers and believers dwell. They represent two ways of life; transgression and disobedience, or grace-filled obedience to the call of God.

In Romans 5:12-21, Christ is depicted as a new Adam, an eschatological agent who begins God's new age. Christ brings a new era of righteousness and grace, as well as constructing a paradigm for the new era. The participationist language within this text reinforces the ideological distinction between those outside the faith and those within. The behaviour which defines life in Christ is connected to the believing congregation, not to the wider social mores.¹⁴¹ This does not mean that broader social mores/ethics are not included within Paul's ethics. Clearly, they are. Rather, it implies that Christ-life is determinative over all else for ethics and behaviour.

The eschatological significance of Christ raises the question of the behaviour of believers in the world. Although Christ in this passage is clearly more than an eschatological agent of God, certainly he is not less than this. The 'newness' brought by Christ would raise questions about the old Adamic humanity: to what extent does Christ as new Adam critique or replace rulers of the old era? Do political authorities outside of Christ retain validity? Such questions formed part of the complex of issues raised by Paul's inheritance of the apocalyptic tradition in depicting Christ.

Christ as Lord: Romans 14:5-12

The title which Paul most often applies to Christ is 'κύριος'.¹⁴² It appears frequently in Romans, and is used predominantly for Jesus, but also appears for God (4:8; 9:27; 12:19; 15:11). When applied to Jesus, 'κύριος' is often connected with other titles or names, such as, 'Lord Jesus' (14:14), 'Lord Jesus Christ' (1:7; 13:14), 'Our Lord Jesus Christ' (5:1, 11; 15:6), and 'Jesus Christ our Lord' (1:4; 5:21). It appears most

¹⁴¹ See the following chapter.

¹⁴² Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 244.

frequently, however, as the simple ‘Lord’ with the context determining when Paul refers to Jesus (10:9, 12). The centrality of Jesus’ Lordship is emphasised particularly in Romans 12-15, where Paul calls on believers to don themselves with the Lord Jesus Christ: ‘ἐνδύσασθε τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν’ (13:14).¹⁴³ Christ’s Lordship is especially central in the ethical sphere within Romans.¹⁴⁴ The Lordship of Christ, however, is predicated on his significance as God’s eschatological agent, exercising his sovereignty within the community of faith. Although Christ’s Lordship is present throughout the entire section, Romans 14:1-12 contains fullest discussion of its significance for believers in Rome.

Romans 14:1-12 begins a section extending to 15:13 with a theme of ‘welcoming the weak in faith’ (14:1a; 14:13; 15:1; 15:7). The ‘weak in faith’ are not identified by Paul, but instances of their ‘weakness’ include their observation of particular days (14:5), their vegetarianism (14:2, 21), and abstinence from wine (14:21). As we argued in chapter one, the ‘weak in faith’ were predominantly Jewish Christians, as indicated by the final subsection (15:7-13) and by the use of the Jewish term ‘κοινός’.¹⁴⁵ In line with his concern throughout the letter, Paul exhorts gentile Christians to respect and welcome the Jews in the Christian community at Rome. The first section of Paul’s argument, Romans 14:1-12, establishes the basis for his discussion in 14:13-23. Whereas Paul appeals to the example of Christ in 15:1-13 as a basis for welcoming the weak, in chapter fourteen Paul reminds the Roman Christians (15:15) that they are not lords over each other (12:3), but rather servants of the same Lord and God. Paul puts differences among believers into perspective. As servants of the same God, to whom they will give an account, there is no basis for believers to judge each other.

The theme of judgment and submission to the *Lord*, then, is central throughout this section. The term ‘κύριος’ occurs nine times within the twelve verses. The interplay between ‘κύριος’ and ‘θεός’ is also a feature of the text, and their creative juxtaposition indicates the close relationship of Jesus to God.

¹⁴³ Allusions to Christ’s Lordly example and teaching are frequent throughout these chapters. See Michael Thompson, *Clothed with Christ: The Example and Teaching of Jesus in Romans 12:1-15:13*, JSNTSup, ed. David Hill (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), 237-241 (summary of results).

¹⁴⁴ For ethical contexts for the use of ‘Lord’ throughout Paul’s letters, see Kramer, *Christ*, 169-173.

¹⁴⁵ For an explanation of Paul’s apparent reference to vegetarianism and abstinence from wine, see Barclay, “Undermine”, 291-292.

The head-verse of the section (14:1) is followed by the mention of different eating habits and a reminder that God is judge (14:2-4). Although some eat all things, the weak eat only vegetables. Both groups should refrain from judging the other, because God has welcomed both (14:3). Paul's use of the aorist tense 'προσελάβετο' indicates the certainty of God's welcome, and perhaps alludes to the concrete act of baptism in which believers enter the church. The verb is the same as that used in its imperative form in 14:1. Paul exhorts the 'strong' to welcome the weak just as God has welcomed all believers. Romans 14:5 further questions the assumption that believers can set themselves up as judges. Believers are servants of the Lord of the community, not of others within the community. Thus, they are judged by the Lord, who will enable them to stand. The reference here is probably to eschatological judgment as well as to daily life. The future tense 'σταθήσεται' indicates a future period. The term 'κύριος' could refer to God or Christ, but the context suggest the latter identification is more likely. The last appearance of the term 'κύριος' was in its connection with Christ (13:14) and throughout these chapters 'κύριος' typically has such a reference.

The next subsection of Romans 14:1-12 deals more explicitly with the Lordship of Christ (14:5-9). Paul points to differences in the community around the observance of special days, as well as in food abstinence. These differences are less important, however, than the conviction of believers in practising their beliefs (14:5b) as well as in honouring the Lord whatever they do (14:6). Paul distinguishes between 'honouring the Lord' and 'thanking God', distinguishing the Lord Jesus from God the Father. In 14:7-9, Christ's Lordship is connected with his death and resurrection. Paul broadens 'honouring the Lord' in daily practices to living and dying to the Lord. Both death and life are in the hands of the Lord. In all things, then, believers should consider themselves under the Lord. Christ's sphere of Lordship over both the dead and the living is connected with his death and resurrection. Romans 14:9 assumes an apocalyptic frame of reference. As well as the reference to Christ's resurrection, the phrase 'Lord of both the dead and the living' suggests the cosmic, apocalyptic rule of God.

Finally, in Romans 14:10-12, Paul introduces an explicit apocalyptic judgment scene to dissuade believers from judging each other. Believers should renounce judgment of each other because all will stand before the judgment seat ('τῷ βήματι') of God. In support, Paul quotes Isaiah 45:23, which he applies to the last judgment.

Interestingly, Paul also surrounds the quote with allusions to other verses so that, as in 14:6, Paul speaks of the Lord as well as of God. The Lord is introduced as part of the judgment scene. The same Lord who died and was raised by God will be active in the subordination of all things to God (1 Cor 15:24, 28). The tradition is clearly one of universal acknowledgment of God's reign (cf., Phil 2:6-11). Paul adapts it to the community context, finishing this section with a sobering reminder that all will give an account to God (Rom 14:12).

Although Paul's focus in Romans 14:1-12 is on the community, Paul draws on the apocalyptic end-time narrative in discussing Christ's Lordship. Christ's Lordship is connected to his eschatological status. Thus, Christ is involved in the final judgment. Christ's Lordship and role in judgment have clear repercussions for the political understanding of believers. In the Jewish and apocalyptic tradition, universal Lordship meant just that. God would be Lord over Israel and the nations of the world, as well as in heaven. Paul attributes the title 'κύριος' to Christ following his resurrection, and clearly it is a Lordship dependent on God. The scope of Christ's Lordship is set by Paul over life and death. His quotation of Isaiah 45:23 recalls a text found within a broader affirmation of God's sovereignty over all the earth (Isa 45:21-46:11). Within this passage of Romans, Paul emphasises that, 'The *Lord* is the authority to whom men are accountable for their every decision.'¹⁴⁶ This is true in the ethical, social, and political sphere. Christ's Lordship means that the life of believers is defined and characterised by their orientation to Christ, not to other believers, and certainly not to outsiders.

A similar text connecting Jesus as Lord with eschatology appears in Romans 10:9-13, a text previously examined in connection with resurrection. In Romans 10:9, it is the confession that Jesus is Lord, combined with a belief in his resurrection, which leads to salvation. Paul connects confession of Jesus as Lord with the passage from Joel 3:5 (LXX; MT, 2:32) (Rom 10:13). Like Isaiah 45, Joel 3:5 also occurs in a context dealing with God's sovereignty, and here explicitly in an eschatological setting. The universal claim of Jesus' Lordship is implicit within these verses. Jesus is Lord of all, both Jew and gentile (Rom 10:12). The connection Paul draws between Jesus' Lordship and his resurrection reflects belief that with Jesus' resurrection, and his exaltation to God's right hand, Jesus became Lord. Jesus is

¹⁴⁶ Kramer, *Christ*, 181.

Lord, not by virtue of the attribution of man, but by virtue of his relationship to God. The confession preserved here may be a formula recited at baptism, as well as within worship.¹⁴⁷

The various images Paul used for Jesus connected his status and role with apocalyptic eschatology. Paul depicts Christ as an eschatological agent, marking the transition from the old age to the new. The depiction of Jesus as Davidic messiah drew on one obvious stream of eschatological speculation in the apocalypses. Other images, often through their connection with Jesus' resurrection, belong to the broad tradition of eschatological redemption-figures. Christ's faithfulness to death in Romans 3:21-25 allowed the eschatological fulfilment of God's righteousness. Christ as new Adam (Rom 5:12-21) connects life, true life, to a Christ-orientated way of life in the new age. Finally, Christ as Lord (Rom 14:1-12) suggests that Christ's rule in the new age had begun to be actualised in the life of the Christian community.¹⁴⁸

Through their connection with eschatological hope, these images raised the question of the status of present rulers, temporarily sovereign in the world that was passing away. Further, they constructed ideas about Christ's agency which conflicted with conventional notions of rule, chiefly that a crucified messiah could exercise rule on God's behalf. Although these images occur in distinct sections of Paul's letters, they furnish part of the literary unity of Romans, and so form a background to Romans 13:1-7.

The Emperor as Redeemer in Roman Imperial Ideology

The political scope of Paul's depiction of Christ as eschatological redeemer is illustrated when the language and concepts of his Christology are compared with those found in Roman imperial ideology. As we noted in chapter two, the recipients of Paul's letter in Rome would encounter daily the grandiose claims of the emperor in their physical and social landscape. Paul's depiction of Jesus as eschatological redeemer challenged these images. At a literary level, this is reflected in parallels between terms used for the emperor and terms used for Christ. 'Son of God' and 'Lord', for instance, are expressions applied to the emperor as well as to Jesus. Far

¹⁴⁷ Cranfield, *Romans II*, 527.

¹⁴⁸ As Käsemann puts it, commenting on Romans 14:9, 'the exalted one claims rule over all things in cosmic universality and... this is actualized in the community.' Käsemann, *Romans*, 372.

more important than literary parallels, however, are the structural parallels between devotion to Christ and devotion to the emperor which lie behind the use of similar language. The use of similar titles reflects broader conceptual parallels between imperial ideology and early Christian faith. Jesus played a similar role in the lives of his followers as the Emperor did for his subjects. Conflicting claims were made for the Emperor and Jesus, as Son of God, as Lord, and as exalted by God.

Parallels between early Christian expressions and terms used in the imperial cult have often been noted.¹⁴⁹ Early last century, Deissmann pointed to a number of examples of what he called a 'polemical parallelism' between early Christian faith and the imperial cult.¹⁵⁰ He dismissed their significance, however, arguing that the low social scale of the early Christian communities precluded their interest in political realities.¹⁵¹ Deissmann's dismissal of 'political interest' among Christians is subject to two criticisms. Firstly, since Deissmann's work, scholars have criticised his 'romantic' view of early Christian communities as solely consisting of 'the lower strata' of society. Many today would argue that Christian communities were constituted by members from a variety of social classes.¹⁵² Secondly, and more fundamentally, the assumption that 'lower classes' have no political life is elitist and unwarranted. Scott's work, discussed in chapter two, has demonstrated that subordinate classes also have an active political life.

The more fundamental problem for interpreters in assessing supposed parallels is in testing their validity. Clearly, the origins of imperial language and Christian language differ. The origin of language, however, is not as important as its function.¹⁵³

Meaning is determined by function and context, not by etymology. Although Paul

¹⁴⁹ Frequently they are dismissed. For a comparison between them, see Cuss, *Imperial Cult*. Cuss's arguments are very similar to this chapter, though his work focuses more on authorial intention whereas here the focus is on how Paul's language resonates for the early Christians (though, admittedly, it is difficult to separate the two).

¹⁵⁰ Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, 342. Deissmann makes this claim in relation to *kurios*, but examines a number of other terms which were somehow connected with the imperial cult and their use in early Christianity, 343-377.

¹⁵¹ Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, 339-340.

¹⁵² See Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 51-73. For a modern attempt to claim that the early Christians were predominantly from the lower class levels of society, see Justin Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty and Survival* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1998). This debate need not be entered into here.

¹⁵³ Cuss, *Imperial Cult*, 53. Wright similarly distinguishes between 'derivation' and 'confrontation'; Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said*, 79-80.

draws on Jewish concepts and notions, he does so within a context in which Greek or eastern concepts played similar roles. Many of the Jewish concepts Paul draws on also developed within a polemical context. The strong monotheism of Judaism, for instance, was probably a reaction to outside pressure to adopt foreign gods.¹⁵⁴ Thus, a study of their function in the original text would actually strengthen the case that Paul was conscious of the polemical cash-value of the language he uses. Paul's language and concepts for Jesus as Son of God, as Lord, and as resurrected one, finds parallels in the ruler cult.

Paul attributes divine sonship to Christ 17x (although the term 'Son of God' appears only 4x), and 7x within Romans itself.¹⁵⁵ The notion of Christ as God's son appears primarily in two clusters in Romans; the opening passage and chapter 8, but a reference also appears in Rom 5.¹⁵⁶ 'Son of God' was also a title throughout the broader Mediterranean world for those with divine gifts, and was frequently used for rulers, especially in Egypt.¹⁵⁷ In Paul's time, the application of divine sonship terminology to the Roman emperors was increasingly common.

As we noted earlier, the attribution of 'Son of God' to Jesus originated in its use for the messiah and in the memory of Jesus' own relationship with God (who addressed God as Abba). 'Son of God' was also used for Israel in the Hebrew Scriptures (Exod 4:22; Hos 11:1), and this probably also influenced Paul's use.¹⁵⁸ Bousset's argument that Paul adopted this title from the Hellenistic context,¹⁵⁹ is unlikely. Although the origins of the title 'son of God' for the emperor and for Christ differ, there is still, however, a large amount of significant overlap in the use of the term.¹⁶⁰ In both

¹⁵⁴ Wright claims, for this period at least, that monotheism 'had everything to do with the two-pronged fight against paganism and dualism.' Wright, *New Testament*, 259.

¹⁵⁵ Hurtado, "Divine Sonship," 221-222.

¹⁵⁶ Hurtado, "Divine Sonship," 223-233, for a discussion of these references.

¹⁵⁷ Oscar Cullmann, *The Christology of the New Testament*, NTL, ed. Alan Richardson, C.F.D. Moule, and Floyd V. Filson (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1963), 271-272.

¹⁵⁸ See L.W. Hurtado, 'Son of God', in *DPL*, 900-906.

¹⁵⁹ Wilhelm Bousset, *Kyrios Christos: A History of the Belief in Christ from the Beginnings of Christianity to Irenaeus* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1970), 206-210. He claims, 'In Paul the Son of God appears as a supraterritorial being who stands in the closest metaphysical connection with God.' (207).

¹⁶⁰ Cuss claims that the notion of God within Judaism and Hellenism were far removed from each other but that the verbal similarity between the terms may have led Christians to refuse the use of the term for the emperor (*Imperial Cult*, 73-74). Our suggestion is that the functions of the language in both contexts (early Christianity and Hellenism) suggests more than purely literary similarities.

cases, the term 'son of God' was used for a particularly close relationship with a god and, in both cases, it was connected with the authority of the figure.

The use of the term for a close relationship with God is reflected in Paul with the use of the definite article in 'Son of God' for Jesus (Rom 1:3, 4; 5:10; 8:3, 29).¹⁶¹ In Romans 5:10, the death of God's son is a basis for reconciliation to God, indicating the close relationship between God and Son. The connection between the death of Jesus and his divine sonship may be prePauline and connected to the 'giving up' formula (Rom 8:32; Gal 2:20).¹⁶² Hurtado suggests, more simply, that the mention of God's Son preserves the theocentric focus of the passage, as well as implying that a great cost was involved in the death of Jesus.¹⁶³ The use of *divi Filius* in Roman imperial ideology reflected the imperial claim to be close to the gods (often in the physical relation with, as opposed to the metaphorical Jewish use). The claim arose in the late republic with Augustus' adoption of the title, which rested on the apotheosis of his father Julius Caesar. Augustus had this title printed on coins, connecting his rule with the gods. Several papyri and inscriptions from the east include the title 'Son of God' for the emperor.¹⁶⁴ Later emperors also adopted the title *divi Filius*. It avoided the actual claim of divinity but still stressed the closest possible connection with the gods. In imperial ideology and in Paul, then, divine sonship connoted the idea of proximity to God.

The title Son of God in imperial ideology and in Paul also signalled that the figure was in some way God's representative or agent upon earth. By virtue of the son's relationship with the father, the son of God could claim authority to act on the earth. In Romans 8:15-17, Jesus' divine sonship is connected to that of believers. The Spirit of adoption allows believers to cry 'Abba, Father', an allusion to Jesus' own way of addressing God. The adoption received by believers is predicated on Christ's own status as Son of God. It is the Spirit who empowers believers to be co-heirs with Christ, but Christ is given authority as firstborn Son. Whereas 8:15-17 suggests the

¹⁶¹ As Hurtado puts it, 'whether one presumes a Jewish or pagan background for the language of divine sonship, Paul's consistent use of the definite article seems intended to make a strong distinction between the use of divine-sonship rhetoric for others and what he intends as true of Jesus,' "Divine Sonship", 222.

¹⁶² Kramer, *Christ*, 115-119.

¹⁶³ Hurtado, "Divine Sonship," 228-229.

¹⁶⁴ Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, 346-347; Cuss, *Imperial Cult*, 71-73.

present adoption of believers, 8:23 places the adoption of believers in the future. The contrast between this future adoption and the present adoption of vv. 15-17 is the familiar eschatological tension found in Paul. Full adoption awaits the redemption of all things, and so requires hope.¹⁶⁵ The idea that all will be adopted as children of God is distant from the Roman application of divine sonship language to elite figures. Nevertheless, the adoption of believers as God's children rests on Jesus' divine sonship, which is unique. While the term 'Son of God' in Romans is connected to redemptive activity in Christ, the expression in Roman imperial ideology connoted a quite different idea of authority (patriarchal rule from above). Octavian stressed he was 'son of God' to claim the authority inherent in the concept. In particular, by claiming divine sonship (and so stressing his relationship to Caesar), Octavian claimed that he and not Antony was the true leader of the Romans. As a god's son, he would have the right and the duty to bring peace to the troubled Republic of Rome.

Although the origins of the term 'κύριος' in early Christianity are not found in imperial ideology,¹⁶⁶ the function of the term in Paul again parallels its use for the emperor. The Lordship of Jesus in Paul was cosmic and universal. Although Bousset claims that Paul adopted 'κύριος' from Hellenistic communities who were familiar with it from Hellenistic cultic practice,¹⁶⁷ the confession of Jesus as Lord preserved in Aramaic in 1 Corinthians (16:22) suggests it goes back to the earliest Jewish Christian community.¹⁶⁸ The confession of Jesus as Lord is likely to have been connected to the resurrection of Christ, which was seen as God's exaltation of him to a position at his right hand. Paul also connects Jesus' Lordship to that of God in the Hebrew Bible (and its Greek translation!). In Paul, Jesus' Lordship implies his agency for God, and rule over humanity. In the Roman imperial ideology, 'κύριος' could function simply as a polite title, but it was frequently used in the east in combination with other divine titles for the emperor, taking on divine

¹⁶⁵ 8:21 also relates the redemption of all things to 'the freedom of the glory of the children of God.'

¹⁶⁶ As Bousset puts it, 'in spite of all the factual and linguistic analogies, it would be a mistaken and hasty judgment if we sought to bring the Christian Kyrios cultus and its development into immediate connection with the cultus of the Caesars.' (*Kyrios*, 141).

¹⁶⁷ Bousset, *Kyrios*, 121-148.

¹⁶⁸ Larry W. Hurtado, *One God, One Lord: Early Christian Devotion and Ancient Jewish Monotheism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 106-107. Bousset's suggestion that the formula originated in a bilingual hellenistic community is unconvincing (*Kyrios*, 129); Cf., Cullmann, *Christology*, 205-215.

connotations.¹⁶⁹ There is also evidence in both Judaism and Christianity that members of both groups refused to address the emperor as 'Lord' precisely because it was used to claim quasi-divine status.¹⁷⁰ Josephus records that the Sicarii refused to use 'Lord' for the emperor, insisting that God alone was their Lord (Jos, *BJ* 407-419). Although their refusal to use the term marked their refusal to acknowledge the sovereignty of the emperors, it was also because they realised the extent that rule could not be separated from faith. In the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* (8.2), Christians were martyred for their refusal to acknowledge the emperor as Lord. At the time Paul wrote, the use of 'Lord' for the Emperor had gravitated towards the divine end of the semantic scale,¹⁷¹ associated with the increase of god-like associations around the Emperor.¹⁷²

A further conceptual parallel between Paul's view of Christ and imperial ideology, although perhaps more tenuous, is found in the similarity between imperial apotheosis and the resurrection of Jesus. Apotheosis involved the ascension and divinization of the Emperor's soul into the heavenly realm after his death.¹⁷³ Often this was indicated by a sign. The death of Julius Caesar, for instance, was followed by a heavenly comet,¹⁷⁴ which was quickly seized upon by Octavian as signalling the ascension of Caesar's soul to heaven. This allowed Octavian to claim the title *Divi Filius*.¹⁷⁵ It also set a precedent for the apotheosis of emperors in Caesar's wake, beginning with Augustus. The apotheosis of later Emperors, following Caesar, was also typically accompanied by a cosmic sign.¹⁷⁶ Pictures of these cosmic signs were often produced on coins, signalling the right of the reigning emperor as a descendent of one divine. Herodian (IV, 2) preserves a short description of apotheosis for Greek readers, which helpfully illustrates a further aspect of the rite. He tells us that the funeral of the emperor involved the release of an eagle from the top of a burning

¹⁶⁹ Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, 349-354.

¹⁷⁰ Cuss, *Imperial Cult*, 60-63.

¹⁷¹ The term could, of course, be used simply as a term of respect, with no particular connotations of divinity.

¹⁷² Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, 350-54.

¹⁷³ Cuss, *Imperial Cult*, 116-130.

¹⁷⁴ Dio, XLV, 7, 1-2; Suet, *Iul.*, 87, 2.

¹⁷⁵ Galinsky, *Augustan Culture*, 312-313.

¹⁷⁶ E.g., following Augustus' death; Dio LVI, 29, 3; Suet, *Aug.*, 46, 1.

pyre, over the dead body. The flight of the eagle was believed to carry the Emperor's soul to heaven.

The idea of resurrection, originating in a monotheistic rather than polytheistic context, was of course radically different. Whereas apotheosis involved transformation or transfiguration of the soul into a god, resurrection simply involved raising the dead, and by no means implied divinisation. Roman apotheosis was reserved for specific elite figures, whereas resurrection involved all humanity at a specific point at the end of time.¹⁷⁷ Further, apotheosis involved the ascension and divinization of the *soul*,¹⁷⁸ whereas resurrection involved the transformation of the body. Finally, apotheosis occurred regularly within time whereas resurrection, belonging to the apocalyptic context of Judaism,¹⁷⁹ occurred at the end of time.

Despite the obvious differences, there were also significant similarities between the interpretation of an imperial apotheosis and that of Christ's resurrection. By disrupting the conventional time-scale of Jewish apocalyptic, Christ's resurrection took on connotations similar to apotheosis. Apotheosis involved the divinisation of the dead ruler and his membership in the heavenly realm. Similarly, the resurrection of Christ was understood by early Christians as exaltation to God's right hand, a quasi-divine status beside God the Father. Whereas apotheosis legitimised the work of the dead emperor and the authority of the new ruler (insofar as he became 'son of a God'), Christ's resurrection validated both Jesus' earthly work (unto death) and heavenly rule. Gentile Christians, familiar with images and literature proclaiming the exaltation of an emperor, could easily compare Christ's role with that of the emperor. Finally, the response of believers to Jesus challenged the devotional space preserved for the emperor in Roman life. For believers, Jesus was God's chief agent in the world, and so worthy of the highest honour.¹⁸⁰ Paul accumulates titles for Jesus to emphasise his significance. As Hengel puts it, 'The more titles were applied to the risen Christ, the more possible it was to celebrate the uniqueness of his saving

¹⁷⁷ Some Jewish views of resurrection, however, suggest it is just the righteous who are to be raised.

¹⁷⁸ In the funeral of the Roman emperors, the eagle carries the soul heavenward.

¹⁷⁹ Beker, *Paul the Apostle*, 152.

¹⁸⁰ At what point believers actually viewed Jesus as God is, of course, controversial. Hurtado argues for a 'binitarian' shape of christology in the early Christian communities which was the root of later christological developments, *One God*.

work.’¹⁸¹ The titles for Jesus operated in a context of worship and honour, similar to titles used for the emperor.¹⁸²

Although worship of the emperor was ostensibly discouraged in Rome, appropriate honour of the emperor was still expected. Various types of ceremonies and rituals emphasised the importance of the emperor in the cities. Temples and statues were constructed in his honour.¹⁸³ While prayers were only directed to both dead and living emperors in the east, in Rome prayers could be offered to the genius of the emperor in Rome. This drew the emperor into the circle of the gods; if not a god, he at least acted for the gods.

Although multiple devotional attachments could and did coexist in antiquity, the exclusivism of early Christians meant that devotion to Jesus prohibited worship of the emperor’s genius or participation in various cultic honours. The functional similarities of the emperor and Jesus in their respective cults meant gentile converts effectively replaced the Emperor with Jesus in their conceptual worlds. As Paul put it in 1 Corinthians 8:5-6;

even though there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth - as in fact there are many gods and many lords - yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.¹⁸⁴

In later times, participation in the imperial cult (a manifestation of imperial ideology) became a sign of loyalty.¹⁸⁵ In the early second century, sacrifice became, ‘a test by which one Roman recognised another as a full member of the society.’¹⁸⁶ Christians refused to offer such sacrifice, arguing that to sacrifice would be to violate their

¹⁸¹ Hengel, ‘Son of God,’ 57.

¹⁸² As Hurtado has claimed, ‘the cultic veneration of Jesus in early Christian circles is the most important context for the use of the Christological titles and concepts.’ Hurtado, *One God*, 13.

¹⁸³ Hopkins, “Divine Emperors,” 206-209.

¹⁸⁴ This exclusivism distances early Christian cults from the mystery religions. Unlike Christian groups, mystery religions were not exclusive communities. Participants in mystery religions sought a complement to their usual private and public worship, not a substitute.

¹⁸⁵ Bruce W. Winter, *Seek the Welfare of the City: Christians as Benefactors and Citizens*, , First-Century Christians in the Graeco-Roman World, ed. Andrew D. Clarke, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994), 124. In some regions, sacrifice became a test of loyalty. Cf., Werner Schäfke, “Frühchristlicher Widerstand,” ANRW, II. 23. 1, 460-723 (1979), 495-502.

¹⁸⁶ Hopkins, “Divine Emperors,” 227.

commitment to the one God and his son Jesus Christ. Even though Christians pointed to their prayers for the emperor and state as evidence of their loyalty, their refusal to sacrifice became 'the most uncompromising possible rejection of the civic model.'¹⁸⁷ The refusal to sacrifice in honour of the Emperor indicated a rejection of the emperor in a position next to God, which was a place reserved for Jesus. Such a development represents a progression from the implicit conflict between imperial ideology and Christ devotion at the time of Paul.¹⁸⁸

The figure of Christ promoted by Paul in the early Roman Christian communities challenged the emperor in the social and religious worlds of gentile Christians. For gentile converts, Jesus took over the functions as well as the titles of the emperor. This gave the figure of Jesus political significance. In replacing the conceptual space formerly taken by the emperor, Paul implicitly challenged the emperor's right to rule, a right which was predicated on his relationship to the divine. The manner in which Jesus functionally replaced the emperor is reflected in Jesus' role as God's chief agent and the responses to that role in early Christian devotional commitment.

Conclusion

In his letter to the Romans, Paul depicts Christ as God's chief eschatological agent. In so doing, he drew on apocalyptic traditions which involved an agent of God in the transition between the ages. Such traditions were political because of their association of such figures with God's new age which would end the old. Often this literature modelled these agents on the realities of power in their time, providing a critique of, and future alternative to, the failures of present rulers.

For Paul, the new age had broken into the old in the resurrection of Christ. God had exalted Christ to a position of authority and power. Paul associated Jesus with the tradition of Davidic Messiah, but also connected other images of Christ to the transition between the ages. God offered Christ as a sacrifice in the present,

¹⁸⁷ Richard Gordon, "Religion in the Roman Empire: the civic compromise and its limits," in *Pagan Priests: Religion and Power in the Ancient World*, ed. Mary Beard and John North (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd., 1990), 252.

¹⁸⁸ Paul's vocation as apostle to the gentiles produced this tension more so than Jewish Christians, who introduced gentiles into a Christ-centred Judaism. By separating gentiles from their former religious networks, and yet refusing to allow their circumcision, Paul helped initiate the process which led outsiders to perceive Christianity as a new religious tradition, and open to all the political suspicion that brought.

eschatological time. Christ as new Adam begins a new era following the old period of sin and corruption. Christ is the eschatological Lord, present in the community following his exaltation. By connecting Jesus with traditions of an eschatological redeemer, Paul depicted Christ as the future (and partially present) alternative to the Roman emperor.

The conceptual parallels between Christ and the emperor reflect Paul's implicit critique of Roman rule. Jesus' resurrection established and confirmed his relationship with God (as 'Son of God') and his sovereignty (as Lord) over all things. By taking on roles associated with the Emperor, Jesus replaced the emperor as chief agent in the social world of Christians. Crucially, the attribution of certain functions to Jesus occurred alongside the rejection of alternative figures, including that of the emperor.

Paul's faith in Jesus as God's eschatological redemption figure raised the possibility that believers would reject the sovereignty of the emperor, a foreign Lord. This possibility contributed to the broader context which led Paul to address obedience to state authorities explicitly in Romans 13:1-7.

CHAPTER FIVE: ESCHATOLOGICAL LIFE AND THE COMMUNITY OF CHRIST

Within apocalyptic eschatology, God's sovereignty over all of creation was the hallmark of eschatological consummation.¹ Although the apocalyptists certainly believed that God was also sovereign over the present world (Dan 2:21), only in the future would God reveal himself to all as the true king over all: the wicked would be judged, and the righteous vindicated (Dan 12:1-3; *1 Enoch* 22; *Jub.* 23:22-31).² God's future sovereignty thus required a dramatic reversal and transformation of the order of the world (*1 Enoch* 1:5-7; 45; *2 Baruch* 44:11-15). Like the other features examined throughout this thesis, the vision of the future in Jewish apocalyptic eschatology implied the end of foreign rule over Israel; Israel, and the world with Israel, would be ruled by God alone. Such a future expectation required an attendant commitment to living faithfully in hope for the future.

As we shall see in this chapter, as an heir of apocalyptic eschatology, Paul also expected the future manifestation of God's universal sovereignty. In Romans, he looks forward to the glorification of the children of God as part of the transformation of the world (Rom 8:18-25), and the salvation of Israel as a fulfilment of God's faithfulness (Rom 9 – 11). In both cases, God would vindicate his character as ruler and redeemer, showing himself as sovereign over the world.³ More uniquely, Paul's position as a Jew who believed that he lived after the arrival of the messiah led him to apply future hopes to the present community. Paul regarded the community of Christ as the locus of God's sovereign activity, which would eventually become public for all of creation. The church at Rome was to assume the life of the future in its relationships in the present. The universal (international) character of the people of God foreshadowed God's future community, as well as its social and ethical life. By connecting God's future rule and salvation with the present community, Paul depicted the Christian fellowship as the place of true life and salvation.

¹ See below. God's sovereignty was connected to God's rule in the new world.

² Thus, God's present sovereignty was hidden to all but the faithful, whereas his future sovereignty would be known to all.

³ Of course, for Paul the figure of Christ also participates in God's future (and present) sovereignty, but, as 1 Cor 15:28 makes clear, at the very end Christ hands over his Lordship to God.

The eschatological interpretation of the community of believers in Rome was a further source of potential conflict with Roman imperial ideology, in which the rule of the emperor was presented in teleological terms. Particularly significant was its clash with the imperially maintained *Pax Romana*. Paul's announcement of peace in Christ fundamentally involved relationships with God and between people, relationships naturally related to society and community, and therefore assumed conceptual overlap with Roman imperial ideology.

Like the other themes examined throughout this thesis, Paul's view of eschatological life in the present community, insofar as it assumed political dimensions, contributed to the background and occasion of Romans 13:1-7. Paul was aware of the implicit political cash-value within apocalyptic eschatology and wanted to ensure that believers would not assume that the community of God was free from obedience to the state.

The Vision of the Future in Apocalyptic Eschatology

Within apocalyptic eschatology, the judgment of the present aeon (Ch.3) included as its flip-side the establishment of an alternative reality ruled by God (Dan 12:1-3; *1 Enoch* 1:3-9; 4 Ezra 8:52-54). Redemption within the apocalyptic-story line followed judgment. As opposed to the description of present corruption and future universal judgment, however, the apocalypses do not provide readers with a furnished or consistent picture of the future world.⁴ The lack of a language with which to express a reality yet to come meant that the future time is often summarised in single terms, such as 'peace,' 'glory,' and 'righteousness.'⁵ Hints of the future in the apocalypses function as signposts to God's future reign rather than as detailed descriptions.⁶

Despite the paucity of details relating to the future (post-judgment) period, God's future and full sovereignty is an underlying theme in apocalyptic eschatology.⁷ God's sovereignty is expressed in his faithfulness to his people and to his promises, as well

⁴ According to Rowland, one of the fullest 'apocalyptic' descriptions of the future is found in Revelation 21; Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 188-189.

⁵ 'Glory' as a term for the final state appears in Dan 12:3; *1 Enoch* 50:51; 2 *Apoc. Bar.* 32:4. See Koch, *Rediscovery of Apocalyptic*, 32.

⁶ As Rowland puts it, 'Most eschatological passages content themselves with only passing references to the eschatological belief.' Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 188.

⁷ Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 156-160.

as in his public rule over his creation. The apocalypses assured their readers that God would rule in the future, whether through his people (Dan 7:27) or through an intermediate figure (*1 Enoch* 69:27-29). Although God's future sovereignty was a focus of apocalyptic eschatology, it was not detached from God's present reign. One of the concerns of the apocalyptic literature was precisely to demonstrate that God remained sovereign even in the midst of his suffering people and creation.⁸ The visionaries assured their readers that the present disorder and chaos was part of God's plan.⁹ In the future, however, God would reveal his sovereignty for the entire world. No longer would faith and trust be needed, for all would plainly see that God was the ruler of all.

The apocalypses affirmed that the faithful elect within Israel would be vindicated, confirming that God was Lord, faithful to his promises. The future sovereignty of God involved his faithfulness beyond the grave, granting life to the faithful who had died, a belief identified by Collins as a key feature within apocalyptic eschatology.¹⁰ This belief in the 'transcendence of death', however, was not simply a 'spiritualising' of redemption, but an affirmation that those who had died in faith, and especially those who had died for their faith, would live again. The transcendence of death also took place within a broader context of the transformation and/or recreation of the world. Apocalyptic eschatology expected radical change. By recreating the world, God would re-establish his claim over it and confirm his status as Lord as well as creator. The apocalypses describe God's sovereignty in a variety of forms which relate to God's redemptive activity. God's future sovereignty takes on political features because it involves a public rule over creation.

Although the visions of Daniel are concerned with the judgment of foreign nations, they also provide hints of a future kingdom.¹¹ The vision of the four beasts and the Son of Man in Daniel 7 reveals that the Jews will inherit a future kingdom under

⁸ For the relationship between suffering and belief in the resurrection belief, see Nickelsburg, *Resurrection*, 170-176.

⁹ Daniel, for instance, ends with the assurance that at the end time, 'None of the wicked shall understand, but those who are wise shall understand' (Dan 12:10b).

¹⁰ See Collins, "Transcendence of Death," 75-97. Collins also notes that apocalyptic eschatology grants importance given to the heavenly sphere.

¹¹ See John J. Collins, "The Kingdom of God in the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha," in *Seers, Sybils and Sages in Hellenistic-Roman Judaism*, JSJSup, ed. John J. Collins, 99-114 (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 99-102.

God. God's future sovereignty would be expressed through the rule and dominion of the world by the people of the Lord (Dan 7:27).¹² Regardless of the identity of the 'Son of Man', the 'people of the holy ones of the Most High' rule as representatives of the Lord. The kingdom which they are granted, however, is eternal, not subject to the transience experienced by former kingdoms. The kingdom also rules the remaining dominions of the earth (Dan 7:27c). Despite the origin of the kingdom in God, then, its scope is political. God's rule is established through Israel over the nations of the earth. As Rowley notes, Daniel,

conceived of... [the kingdom of God] as a political kingdom, exercised in an earthly state, and administered by Jewish saints. But more significant than this, he conceived of it as a kingdom in which the will of God should be supreme and unchallenged.¹³

As well as the nationalistic kingdom depicted in Daniel 7, Daniel 12:1-3 offers a glimpse of the transcendent life to come. The passage is the only text in the Hebrew Bible where a future transcendent life is unambiguously promised to the elect.¹⁴ Daniel depicts this future life by means of resurrection. Both righteous and sinners will be raised, but whereas sinners will be raised to 'shame' and 'contempt' (Dan 12:2), the righteous will be raised to life, and will 'shine like stars' (Dan 12:3). The righteous will share in the heavenly life, similar to the angels.¹⁵ The text was produced, of course, in response to the Seleucid persecution of the Jews. It does not affirm a general and universal resurrection, but the resurrection of those who suffered for their righteousness and of those who had persecuted the righteous ('many [not all] of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake', 12:2b).¹⁶ As Nickelsburg notes, 'Daniel does not conceive of a general resurrection of all men, but of those particular people whose unjust treatment in this life presents a problem for the writer.'¹⁷ God's sovereignty is preserved through his faithfulness to the elect, who are raised from death to be rewarded with future life.

¹² See the last chapter for a discussion of the eschatological redemption figure here.

¹³ Rowley, *Relevance of Apocalyptic*, 50.

¹⁴ Hartman, *Book of Daniel*, 309; Collins, *Daniel*, 394-398. Resurrection texts are also found elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible (Isa 26:19; Ezek 37:1-14), but only here is resurrection definitely 'literal'.

¹⁵ Collins, *Daniel*, 393-394.

¹⁶ Nickelsburg, *Resurrection*, 23; Collins, *Daniel*, 392.

¹⁷ Nickelsburg, *Resurrection*, 23

In Daniel, then, the future involves a kingdom for God's people (Dan 7:18, 28), and also a time of transcendent transformation (12:2-3). Daniel 7 – 12 combines political nationalism with a belief in a heavenly future for the Jewish faithful, who will share in transcendent life like the angels. The combination of earthly restoration/transformation and heavenly transcendence characterises much of apocalyptic eschatology. It shows that a focus on the transcendent is far from antithetical to an emphasis on political rule.

The two historical apocalypses of *1 Enoch* present different pictures of the future life. In the *Book of Dreams* (*1 Enoch* 83-90), the climax of the animal vision suggests not only the survival of the righteous (the remaining sheep) into the new age (*1 Enoch* 90:28-30), but also their transformation into 'white cows' (90:38). The new age emerges following God's judgment of the heavens and the earth (90:20-27). Jerusalem is destroyed and replaced by a 'new house' for the righteous (90:28-29), alluding to the tradition of a future 'new Jerusalem' (Ezek 40-48; Isa 54:11; 4 Ezra 7:26; Rev 21:2, 10).¹⁸ The text depicts an end to war (90:34, 'laying down the sword'),¹⁹ and the end of apostasy (90:35, 'the eyes of all of them were opened'). Although the world is transformed in 90:30-36, the faithful themselves are changed in 90:37-49. Notwithstanding the difficulty of identifying the 'white bull' and the 'lamb' in 90:37-38,²⁰ the visionary asserts transformation as necessary for existence in the new age. The text, then, affirms that the earth, in its historical, geographical, and political dimensions, is changed by God. The righteous themselves also experience transformation in order to live in the renewed earth.

The *Apocalypse of Weeks* depicts various stages in the future redemption. At the end of the eight week, the righteous are rewarded and, as in the *Animal Apocalypse*, a new Jerusalem is constructed; 'A house shall be built for the Great King for evermore' (*1 Enoch* 90:13).²¹ The ninth week sees judgment and redemption extended throughout the world (90:14). The text suggests that the gentiles who are

¹⁸ Black, *1 Enoch*, 278.

¹⁹ 'Divinely ordained warfare is no longer necessary, and slaughter has come to an end,' Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch* I, 406.

²⁰ See Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch* I, 406-406.

²¹ The text could also refer to specifically to the Temple, but it is likely that it refers to the whole entity - the Temple within Jerusalem; Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch* I, 448-449. Black notes that the reference to a new Temple/Jerusalem indicates that the vision was probably written before Judas' rededication of the Temple in 164 BCE; Black, *1 Enoch*, 293.

not condemned are converted,²² and so ‘direct their sight to the path of uprightness.’ All within the world recognise God’s sovereignty, and begin to follow his will. In the tenth week, the author depicts cosmic transformation. The old heaven (and, implicitly, earth) is destroyed and replaced by a new heaven (and earth) (*1 Enoch* 91:16). Collins notes that the work ‘is probably the first Jewish document to envisage the end of the world in a literal sense.’²³ Following the creation of the new world, the *Apocalypse of Weeks* depicts a general period of ‘goodness and righteousness’ (91:17), which lasts into eternity. A further part of the final verse reconstructed from the Aramaic may also suggest resurrection takes place.²⁴ Whether or not the text depicts resurrection, it is clear that throughout the *Apocalypse of Weeks* God’s redemptive work is connected to his sovereignty. God’s future work will encompass the whole earth, as well as the heavens.

The *Similitudes of Enoch* also speaks of the transformation of heaven and earth in preparation for the righteous; ‘I shall transform heaven and make it a blessing of light forever: And I shall (also) transform the earth and make it a blessing’ (*1 Enoch* 45:4b-5a). The transformation of heaven and earth does not, however, indicate a concomitant resurrection of the righteous. Rather, the righteous who survive in the last days will enjoy eternal life in the new earth (*1 Enoch* 45:4-6; 58:1ff.). As we saw in the previous chapter, the *Similitudes of Enoch* depicts the ‘Elect One’ assisting in establishing God’s kingdom and judging humanity (*1 Enoch* 45-52). The Elect One expresses God’s true rule on the earth, and so makes known God’s sovereignty. One of the most common titles throughout the *Similitudes* is, in fact, the ‘Lord of Spirits.’²⁵ Throughout the *Similitudes of Enoch*, the ‘Elect One’ is subordinate to the Lord.

In 4 Ezra, a general contrast between the eras is assumed. As 4 Ezra 7:50 famously puts it, ‘the Most High has made not one world but two.’²⁶ The transition between the ages is likened to the relationship between Jacob and Esau, with Jacob grasping

²² Black, *1 Enoch*, 293-294; Nickelsburg suggests that the witness of the righteous may lead to the conversion of the nations; *1 Enoch* 1, 449-450.

²³ Collins, “Prophecy to Apocalypticism,” 140.

²⁴ Black, *1 Enoch*, 294-295.

²⁵ Black, *1 Enoch*, 190-192.

²⁶ Cf., 4 Ezra 8:1, ‘He answered me and said, ‘The Most High has made this world for the sake of many, but the world to come for the sake of only a few’’

hold of Esau's foot at birth (6:8-10); 'Now Esau is the end of this age, and Jacob is the beginning of the age that follows' (6:9). As we saw earlier, however, 4 Ezra includes a variety of texts dealing with the future life. In some texts, 4 Ezra looks forward to a general redemption, which follows the destruction of the Roman Empire. Thus, the Eagle Vision depicts a period in which the messiah will 'free' the people of God, and keep them safe until the final judgment (4 Ezra 12:34). Similarly, the interpretation of the vision of the Man from the Sea depicts a period following the destruction of the nations in which those surviving will be saved (4 Ezra 13:39-50). 4 Ezra 13 portrays this salvation as involving the restoration of the nine tribes of Israel, who return to the land of Israel (13:40). The author draws on a tradition that God would restore the community of Israel and return them to their land (Isa 11:11-13; Jer 30:3).²⁷ The reconstitution of the 'lost' tribes of Israel shows that the historical and political hope for Israel's unity is fulfilled. God's people will live again in their own land, free from foreign domination.

As well as depicting the people's redemption and restoration to the Promised Land, 4 Ezra describes faithful Jews as transcending death. 4 Ezra 7:75-99, studied earlier, describes the post-mortem state of the faithful and the unrighteous. While the souls of the unrighteous wander in torment (7:79-87), the souls of the faithful will experience joy and anticipate final redemption (7:88-99). The souls of the faithful look forward to their own resurrection, when they shall see the face of God (7:96, 98). The resurrection is depicted in an earlier passage, 4 Ezra 7:29-44, and takes place in the distant future. It occurs following the messianic period (7:28-29), and after the 'seven days' of primeval silence upon the earth (7:30-31).²⁸ Following the seven days of silence,

The earth shall give up those who are asleep in it, and the dust those who rest there in silence; and the chambers shall give up the souls that have been committed to them (7:32)

Resurrection is general and immediately followed by the final judgment, in which the righteous will be separated from the unrighteous (7:33-44).²⁹ The unrighteous are

²⁷ Stone, *4 Ezra*, 404.

²⁸ The 'seven days' of silence alludes to the 'seven days' of creation; Stone, *4 Ezra*, 217.

²⁹ Nickelsburg points out that, unlike in some other apocalypses (e.g., Dan), resurrection is not related to any specific crisis or situation, but relates generally to righteous and unrighteous behaviour; Nickelsburg, *Resurrection*, 138-140.

condemned into a 'pit of torment', but the righteous receive a 'paradise of delight' (7:36). Resurrection is also implied in the conclusion of the work, where Ezra assures the people that, if obedient, 'after death you shall obtain mercy... when we shall live again' (14:34-35).³⁰ Again, general resurrection takes place, as the righteous and the ungodly are revealed only after 'living again' (14:35b).

Like the other apocalypses, 4 Ezra combines a national future restoration with transcendent eschatology. This combination, found throughout the apocalypses, is significant. Even when the emphasis was on the transcendent elements of God's redemption, redemption had political repercussions because it depicted God's sovereign activity as universal and public.

For God's sovereignty to be realised, apocalyptic eschatology also depicted a break between the present and the future. The discontinuity between the present and the future distanced apocalyptic eschatology from prophetic eschatology. As Rowley claims, 'Speaking generally, the prophets foretold the future that should arise out of the present, while the apocalyptists foretold the future that should break into the present.'³¹ A general consensus has assumed such a contrast between prophetic and apocalyptic eschatologies.³²

Several recent scholars, however, have questioned the legitimacy of such a contrast, arguing that the element of continuity between later and earlier Jewish hopes is greater than their discontinuity.³³ Representative of this position is N. T. Wright. Wright argues that apocalyptic eschatology and prophetic eschatology shared the same 'earthly' hope for Israel's national restoration and rule under God.³⁴

³⁰ Note, however, 4 Ezra 6:25-28, which makes no mention of resurrection. Rather, those who remain on the earth at the time of God's redemption will be saved and join 'those who were taken up, who from their birth have not tasted death' (6:26b), an apparent reference to those who have 'ascended' within Jewish history.

³¹ Rowley, *Relevance of Apocalyptic*, 34.

³² See Mowinckel's contrast between Early Jewish Hope (ch.5) and Later Jewish Eschatology (Ch.8) in *He That Cometh*, 125-154, 261-279. Mowinckel admits, however, that these views are often combined in the later literature,

³³ G. B. Caird, *The Language and Imagery of the Bible* (London: Duckworth, 1980), 260-265; George B. Caird, "Eschatology and Politics: Some Misconceptions," in *Biblical Studies in Honour of William Barclay*, ed. Johnston R. McKay and James F. Miller, 72-86 (London: Collins, 1976), 82-86; Richard A. Horsley, *Jesus and the Spiral of Violence: Popular Jewish Resistance in Roman Palestine* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987), 138-139.

³⁴ Wright, *New Testament*, 280-299.

Cosmological language should not, according to Wright, be read literally, but rather functioned as strongly metaphorical language to denote God's future activity.³⁵ The 'representative' function of such language is important, as much of the language represents historic entities allegorically.³⁶ Although several dualisms are found in apocalyptic eschatology, Wright contends that cosmological dualism, the contrast between the present world and a radically new one, is not part of Jewish eschatology (whether apocalyptic or otherwise).³⁷

Although the language of apocalyptic makes it difficult to assess just what is being said,³⁸ the events referred to in apocalyptic eschatology do differ from those found within prophetic literature. Apocalyptic eschatology draws images of destruction and recreation from prophetic eschatology and interprets them in the context of a real worldly transformative action.³⁹ Thus, whereas in Isaiah 65:17ff. language of a 'new creation' appears to be a way of speaking of God's activity in leading Israel into a renewed national existence, in the *Apocalypse of Weeks*, the destruction of the 'first heaven' and establishment of the 'new heaven' (*1 Enoch* 91:16) takes on cosmic proportions: the new heaven is followed by 'many weeks without number forever', which, 'shall be (a time of) goodness and righteousness, and sin shall no more be heard of forever' (91:17). The similarity between the language of late Israelite prophecy, in which metaphors from creation are used to illustrate concepts within history, and the language of apocalyptic, in which the language is used to refer to a transformed existence, should not be confused. In both cases, metaphor is used, but in the one case it functions to indicate events within the history of Israel, and, in the other, it refers to events which are the climax of history.⁴⁰ Nickelsburg helpfully

³⁵ Wright, *New Testament*, 280-286.

³⁶ Wright, *New Testament*, 289-291.

³⁷ Wright, however, is somewhat unclear in exactly what he means with his language. Despite his polemic against 'otherworldly' readings of apocalyptic, he also believes that some sort of transformation of the world takes place.

³⁸ For a discussion of the language and an innovative approach, see Wilder, "Eschatological Imagery," 229-245.

³⁹ The extent and nature of such transformation is hidden behind the metaphors used (would it require a prior destruction of the earth, or God transforming it?). What is clear, however, is that the transformation would be dramatic and recognisable as such.

⁴⁰ For a defence of such development between prophetic and later Jewish eschatology, against Caird's interpretation of eschatological language as typically metaphorical, see Allison, *End of the Ages*, 84-90.

suggests that the language of trito-Isaiah, in which metaphors and images of recreation appear, was interpreted more 'literally' in later Jewish literature because only by such recreation (specifically by resurrection) could God fulfil his promises.⁴¹

The theme of transcendence of death in apocalyptic eschatology also reveals that it involved more than a simple continuation of prophetic eschatology. Wright claims that the righteous expected, 'to be raised to new bodies when the kingdom came, since they would of course need new bodies to enjoy the very much this-worldly *shalom*, peace and prosperity that was in store',⁴² but to introduce the idea of resurrection involved more than a simple 'addition' to the Jewish hope expressed in the prophets. A recreation and/or transformation of the world were concomitant with belief in resurrection. It was not just humanity, but the world itself that would be changed (*1 Enoch* 1:5-7; 72:1; 4 Ezra 13:29-30).⁴³ Thus, the development of the messianic kingdom notion in apocalyptic eschatology was essentially an attempt to combine older prophetic hopes with the apocalyptic belief in God's final transformation of the earth (*1 Enoch* 91:12-13; 4 Ezra 7:26-30; 12:31-34; 2 Baruch 29:3-30:1; 40:1-4).⁴⁴ By affirming that a messiah would rule for a temporary period over a historic Israel, the concerns of the older prophetic eschatology are addressed, but by limiting this era to a temporary period and by subordinating it to God's final salvific redemption, the apocalyptic perspective is maintained.

Scholars who affirm the continuity between prophetic and apocalyptic eschatology are frequently interested in preserving the political and historical relevance of the latter.⁴⁵ Wright claims that apocalyptic eschatology must speak of events within history to preserve 'creational monotheism'.⁴⁶ However, as Owen points out,

⁴¹ Nickelsburg, *Resurrection*, 20-22.

⁴² Wright, *New Testament*, 286. Horsley also claims that resurrection belief was merely a new 'symbolic element' within Jewish eschatology which did not represent a fundamental change in traditional Jewish hope; Horsley, *Jesus and the Spiral of Violence*, 133-137.

⁴³ Admittedly, the apocalypses differed in whether they propose a destruction of the world before the establishment of a new one (*1 Enoch* 1:5-7) or the transformation of the world (*1 Enoch* 45:5-6). But in both cases, transformation occurs.

⁴⁴ Vos, *Pauline Eschatology*, 228-234; Kreitzer, *Jesus and God*, 29-31.

⁴⁵ However, Hanson argues both for a connection of apocalyptic with prophecy and for a trend away from concern with history (and political events) in apocalyptic eschatology; Hanson, *Dawn of Apocalyptic*.

⁴⁶ It also allows a rereading of Jesus', and early Christian, apocalyptic sayings which avoids the embarrassment of their non-fulfilment; Wright, *New Testament*, 285.

creational monotheism was still preserved in maintaining God's creative ability to inaugurate a new world.⁴⁷ The sovereignty of God is a real sovereignty in God's transforming activity. Whether or not God's kingdom in the apocalypses involved the end of history or a radical change within history, it would certainly radically change the relationship of God's people to foreign rulers and nations. The new world is sometimes depicted as requiring the destruction of the old, and at other times its renewal, but in both cases fundamental change would take place. Prophetic eschatology also affirmed God's future sovereignty, but apocalyptic eschatology highlights a higher degree of discontinuity between the present and future (thus, a 'disjunctive eschatology').

The future sovereignty of God, linked to disjunctive eschatology, was characteristic of apocalyptic eschatology. Although God's future sovereignty was expressed in different ways, the belief that God would put wrongs to right and rule over all the earth as Lord of all is found throughout the apocalyptic literature. The sovereignty of God was a political idea because it encompassed the public as well as the private sphere, and enveloped the whole of humanity. God's rule would not simply be 'religious', over the 'hearts and minds' of believers, but a social reality.⁴⁸ The world would require transformation in preparation for God's rule (*1 Enoch* 1:5-7; 91:6). Such a vision of the future allowed an implicit criticism of the present world order, as God's new era would involve a radical transformation of the present status quo. Foreign rulers would be displaced and God would rule in holy sovereignty.⁴⁹

Realised Eschatology in Romans and the Community of Faith

Paul followed the end-time narrative of apocalyptic, looking forward to God's sovereign future rule over all of creation, and believing that the coming age would be radically distinct from the present. In adopting this schema, Paul inherited its challenge to the current world-order. The appearance of God's future kingdom meant the dissolution of present kingdoms. Paul and the early Christians, however, also reassessed the apocalyptic worldview in light of the Christ-event. The most

⁴⁷ Owen, "Jewish Eschatology," 85ff. For Owen's full critique of Wright, see pp. 80-91.

⁴⁸ See below for a discussion of the transformation necessary for God's Lordship to be actualised.

⁴⁹ 'The implementation of the kingdom of God, whether by a messiah or a direct heavenly intervention, implied the destruction of the kings and the mighty of this world,' Collins, "The Kingdom of God," 114.

significant event had occurred in the past, although its fulfilment awaited the future.⁵⁰ Paul connected elements associated with the eschatological period with the present, creating a tension between the experience of God's kingdom and its coming consummation. The previous chapters looked at Paul's application of apocalyptic themes, along with their political echoes, to God's past and present activity. The main focal point of God's judgment and redemption was Christ. For Paul, however, the community also became heir to God's present eschatological activity. Paul discusses the Spirit in the community in Romans 8:1-27, and stresses its eschatological significance as the power of the new life, enabling believers to follow God. In Romans 14:1 – 15:13, he encourages the 'weak' and 'strong' within Rome to live at peace with one another, believing that reconciliation between Jew and gentile was a marker of the eschatological era. Paul also connects God's present activity to God's future work within the world and with Israel (Rom 8, 9 – 11).

By interpreting the present in light of the future, Paul presented the community as the anticipation and fulfilment of God's eschatological promises, and so the locus of God's action and sovereignty. The Spirit indicated that God was sovereign in the midst of the community, with reconciliation between Jew and gentile functioning as a concrete manifestation of such sovereignty. A future hope remained, however, in which the presence of God experienced in the present community would universally embrace all of creation. The theme of the Christ community as an *eschatological* community, implicitly superseding alternative claims on the loyalty of believers, forms part of the background for Paul's discussion of obedience to governing authorities in Romans 13:1-7. Its political significance lay in the claim that believers lived as members of God's kingdom within the present, anticipating in their existence the nature of God's imminent new world which would extend to all humanity in the near future.

The Spirit and the People of God (Romans 8:1-27)

In Romans 8, Paul elucidates his eschatological pneumatology, whereby the end-time presence of the Spirit fills and transforms the 'body of Christ'. For Paul, as for the other early Christians, the presence of the Spirit revealed that God was fulfilling his

⁵⁰ For Paul's focus on the Christ-event as determinative for his eschatology, see Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 465.

promises in their midst and that the time of the end was dawning (Rom 8:23; 2 Cor 1:22; Gal 3:2-5).⁵¹ Two prominent themes emerge in Romans 8:1-27. The Spirit *empowers* believers to fulfil the law, leading believers to obey God, and, in so empowering those who believe, the Spirit *defines* the community of the righteous.⁵² Both of these themes are predicated on Paul's belief that the Spirit is God's active and living eschatological power. Although these themes have been noted by previous interpreters, their broader social and political implications have been overlooked by most interpreters. Paul drew on a tradition, however, which associated eschatology with God's sovereignty over the world (1 Cor 15:24-28; 1 Thess 5:1-10; Phil 2:9-11). He depicted the Spirit as the agent of such sovereignty, working within the Christ-centred community (Rom 8:9-17; 1 Cor 12:4-13). Paul does not limit the rule of God through the Spirit to a 'private' or 'religious' sphere, but maintains that believers are transformed through the Spirit into the likeness of Christ, the eschatological man. Life in the Spirit implied a wholly different existence to life in the flesh.

The broader context for Paul's discussion in Romans 8 is found in the early Christian experience of the Spirit, which believers interpreted as the activity of God in their midst and a sign of the end-time.⁵³ In Acts 2, Luke has Peter appeal to the prophecy of Joel in explaining the experience of the Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2:16-21), and Spirit terminology is present throughout the whole of the New Testament.⁵⁴ In Romans 8, Paul explicitly connects the Spirit to eschatology. In 8:23, he refers to the 'first-fruits of the Spirit' ('ἀπαρχὴν τοῦ πνεύματος'), indicating that the experience of the Spirit belonged to an eschatological era. Experiencing future redemption in the present, Paul describes believers as 'groaning inwardly' for its consummation (their full adoption as children of God and the restoration of creation) (Rom 8:19-23).

⁵¹ Vos, *Pauline Eschatology*, 59-60, 159-171.

⁵² Paul's thought follows a very similar pattern to Ezekiel (36:26-28), where the Spirit also empowers believers to obey God and creates/confirms the community of God.

⁵³ For the role of experience in early Christian doctrinal formation (with a focus on Christ-devotion), see L. W. Hurtado, "Religious Experience and Religious Innovation in the New Testament," *Journal of Religion* 80, 2 (2000), 183-205. For the particular significance of the experience of the Spirit, see also Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 426-434.

⁵⁴ Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 416-419.

The early Christian view of the Spirit drew on the biblical association of the Spirit with the eschatological era.⁵⁵ Throughout the Hebrew Bible, God's Spirit stands for God's creative power, whether in creation (Gen 1:2) or within Israel (Isa 31:3).⁵⁶ At specific and significant moments within Israel, God's Spirit acted within individuals and communities. The Spirit was present in David as the Lord's anointed (1 Sam 16:13), while a recurring motif through the book of Judges is the Spirit acting in the 'judges' of Israel (Judg 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 13:15). God's Spirit, however, was not present in all of God's people (Num 11:29⁵⁷).

In the later texts the belief developed that the Spirit would come upon all in God's eschatological time.⁵⁸ In Isaiah 32:15a, God's pouring out of the Spirit is associated with the end-time, along with the rule of God's king (32:1) and the renewal of creation (32:15b).⁵⁹ In Ezekiel, a work which often refers to God's Spirit, God promises to give his people a 'new heart' and a 'new spirit' (11:19-20; 36:26-28). The Spirit ('my spirit') will enable God's people to follow his ordinances (36:27), and also confirms the community as the people of God (36:28). Similarly, in Joel 2:28-29, God promises to 'pour out' his spirit on 'all flesh', an event connected with visions, dreams, and the transformation of creation (Joel 2:28-31).

Surprisingly, the apocalyptic works deal rarely with the Spirit as an eschatological phenomenon.⁶⁰ The Jewish community was conscious, however, of the lack of the Spirit,⁶¹ and so implicitly looked forward to the outpouring of the Spirit in the future. The Qumran community was an exception to the general absence of the Spirit of God

⁵⁵ Of course, the Spirit has been mentioned a number of times before this text in Romans, but only in Romans 8 does Paul develop his ideas of the Spirit.

⁵⁶ For the Spirit of God in the OT, see Baumgärtel, *TDNT* VI (1968), 365-367; Fee, *Empowering Presence*, 905-910.

⁵⁷ 'Would that all of the LORD's people were prophets, and that the LORD would put his spirit on them!' (Num 11:29b).

⁵⁸ See Bieder, *TDNT* VI (1968), 370; Fee, *Empowering Presence*, 909-910.

⁵⁹ Here is a case where the OT refers to an expectation within Jewish history but which was probably read in later times as purely eschatological (concerning the end-time events).

⁶⁰ 'Noticeably scarce in these various writings [of the intertestamental period] is an explicit expression of anticipation of the outpouring of the Spirit in the "latter days."' Fee, *Empowering Presence*, 915. Fee notes the exception as *Jub.* 1:22-25 but disputes the significance of the *Wisdom of Solomon* for Paul's thought (and belief in an *eschatological* Spirit).

⁶¹ Zech 13:2-3; *Jos. Ag. Ap.* 1.31; *Apoc Bar.* 85:3; 1 Macc. 4:46. So Fee, *Empowering Presence*, 913-915.

in Second Temple Jewish literature. The presence of the Spirit at Qumran was associated for the covenanters with their status as God's eschatological people (1QH 16:11-12), and so forms a significant parallel to the early Christian community.

Within Romans, chapter 8 follows Paul's extensive discussion of the 'flesh', 'sin', and 'the law' (Rom 6-7), in which Paul shows how Christ has released believers from the matrix of godless living created by the intersection of what function effectively as 'spiritual' forces controlling human life.⁶² Whereas these previous chapters are concerned with release from the negative effects of life before Christ, Romans 8 represents a more positive turn in the argument, dealing with the positive effects of life in the Spirit.⁶³ Mentioned in passing throughout the letter (Rom 1:4, 9; 2:29; 5:5; 7:6), the Spirit comes to the foreground in Romans 8. Dunn describes this text (Rom 8:1-27) as, 'unquestionably the high point of Paul's theology of the Spirit.'⁶⁴

Paul begins by effectively summarising the preceding argument;

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death (8:1-2).

The assurance that believers are not condemned entails the notion that God had *already* given the verdict of vindication (declaration of salvation) in Christ Jesus. In the apocalypses, vindication (or the declaration that the chosen ones were judged as righteous) was associated with a *future* life, and connected also to the transcendence of death.⁶⁵ Paul believes that those who participate in Christ experience the fulfilment of God's eschatological promises. Because believers live and die 'in Christ Jesus' (Rom 6:1-11), they look forward to their resurrection in him trusting in the same Spirit (Rom 6:5; 8:11). The reference to release from condemnation ('κατάκριμα') also recalls Paul's discussion of Adam and Christ in Romans 5:12-21, in which the only other occurrences of the noun occur in the letter, and, indeed, in the New Testament as a whole (Rom 5:16, 18).

⁶² See chap. 3.

⁶³ Part of the text, however, also involves release from life in the 'flesh'.

⁶⁴ Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 423.

⁶⁵ See the earlier discussion.

In Romans 8:2, Paul combines the cluster of terms found within the previous chapters to summarise their theme: the 'law' (νόμος) of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has freed you from the law (νόμου) of sin and death' (8:2).⁶⁶ Νόμος' here refers not to a general principle but the Torah itself, whether manipulated by sin and death or transformed in the light of the Spirit's work in Christ.⁶⁷ Thus, the same law is referred to but the orientation and perception (and use!) of the law makes it an agent of death (Rom 7) or a means to life (Rom 8:4). Romans 8:3-4 specifies the transition point between the old law and the new; by condemning sin in the flesh of Christ,⁶⁸ God enabled believers to 'fulfil' the just requirements (δικαίωμα) of the law and to live in the Spirit. Fulfilling the righteous requirements of the law marked one out as 'righteous' before God. The significance of this claim is important; Paul is claiming that only those who are in Christ truly fulfil the law because they understand the purpose and end (τέλος, cf., Rom 10:4) of the law.⁶⁹ Here, then, Paul introduces the characteristics of those who 'obey the law', developing the hints found in Romans 2 (2:12-16, 25-29). Christ has brought an end to the law and redefined what it means to live in accordance to the law, which is *living in the Spirit*.

Paul spends the rest of the chapter unpacking the significance of walking by the Spirit. The themes of living by the Spirit and the community of the Spirit, which surface in the introduction of Romans 8, are tightly integrated throughout the chapter, making it difficult to separate them neatly. Broadly speaking, however, Romans 8:5-8 deals with the Spirit as empowering believers to live righteously, and Romans 8:9-17 connects the Spirit to the creation of community.

Romans 8:5-8 elaborates the contrast between life in the flesh and life in the spirit introduced in Romans 8:4b. Those who live in the Spirit are empowered to serve

⁶⁶ Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "Paul and the Law," in *To Advance the Gospel: New Testament Studies*, 186-201 (New York: Crossroad, 1981), 193.

⁶⁷ The interpretation of νόμος terminology is notoriously difficult, especially in light of post-Sanders developments dealing with 'Paul and the law.' As we saw in chapter three, Paul's perspective on the law is best understood within a broader eschatological framework in which Paul believed that Christ has fulfilled the law. For those outside of Christ, however, the law had been manipulated to the service of sin and death.

⁶⁸ Although Cranfield suggests that περί ἁμαρτίας in Rom 8:3 is simply general (Romans I, 382), the phrase is used in the LXX for a sin-offering (Lev 5:6-7; 16:3; Isa 53:10). Some interpreters suggest that a sacrificial sense is also present here (Dunn, Romans I-8, 422), which in light of Paul's other sacrificial allusions (Rom 3:21-26) seems likely.

⁶⁹ The interpretation of 'Christ is the end of the law' in Rom 10:0 is notoriously controversial. For a survey of interpretations, see Cranfield, Romans II, 515-520 (Cranfield settles on 'goal').

God, while those who live in the flesh, ‘cannot please God’ (8:8).⁷⁰ As we saw in chapter two, the contrast between flesh and spirit reflects the disjunctive eschatology of apocalyptic, not a soul-body dualism. Porter wrongly claims that Paul’s flesh-spirit contrast represents a difference from the two-age perspective of apocalyptic, and is effectively a ‘spiritualising’ of apocalyptic hope.⁷¹ Paul’s view, however, rests, not on a renunciation of the future dimension of apocalyptic, but in a realisation that the Spirit is at work after the Christ-event, and is even now present.

The closest literary parallel for this text outside of the New Testament is found in the treatise of the two spirits at Qumran (1QS 3:13-4:26).⁷² In the Qumran text, rather than ‘Spirit’ contrasted with ‘flesh’, the ‘spirit of truth’ is contrasted with the ‘spirit of falsehood/injustice’. In the Qumran parallel, ‘life in the spirit of truth’ is also radically different from ‘life in the spirit of falsehood’. For the covenanters, the two spheres indicate two totally different and separate areas of existence. The pain of the present, however, is that the sphere of the Spirit is not yet complete, and the faithful still struggle in the flesh (1QS 3:15-18).

Paul defines ‘living in the Spirit’ as ‘thinking on the things of the Spirit’ (Rom 8:5). In view of the connection Paul draws between the Spirit and Christ a few verses later, and the general notion of participation in Paul, it seems likely that ‘thinking on the things of the Spirit’ involves transformation into the image of Christ (cf., 8:29; 12:2). Although the ‘things’ of the Spirit are left undefined, Paul’s treatment of the same theme in Galatians defines the ‘things of the Spirit’, or the ‘fruit of the Spirit’, in terms of ethical and social qualities; ‘the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control’ (Gal 5:22-23a). Whereas Paul’s contrast between flesh and spirit in Galatians occurs in the paraenetic section of the letter, and so includes a list of ethical and social attributes connected to each sphere, Paul compares flesh with spirit in Romans in the midst of

⁷⁰ See our earlier discussion of life ‘in the flesh’ in chapter three.

⁷¹ Porter, “Apocalyptic Conceptions,” 193-195. This is part of Porter’s general attempt to distance Paul from apocalyptic hope. For Porter, Paul’s orientation to the spiritual, to being ‘in Christ’, reflects an inward religion quite different from the apocalyptic worldview.

⁷² For a comparison of Paul’s spirit-flesh dualism and the DSS, see W. D. Davies, “Paul and the Dead Sea Scrolls: Flesh and Spirit,” in *The Scrolls and the New Testament*, ed. Krister Stendahl (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1958), 157-182.

the main body of the letter and so his treatment of ethical and social values awaits Romans 12 – 15.⁷³

Although unspecified at this point in Romans, the ‘things of the Spirit’ involve those characteristics and attributes characteristic of God’s community. Romans 8:7 compares the mind set on the flesh and the mind set on the Spirit in terms of their goal or end; the end of the former is death (cf., Rom 6:23; Gal 6:8) while the latter results in ‘life and peace’ (cf., Rom 5:1; Gal 6:8). Because ‘death’ acts against God (Rom 5:16), those in the flesh are hostile to God and unable to submit to God’s law. The mention of ‘life and peace’ not only denotes an inner experience of God in the Spirit, but more fully refers to God’s eschatological work within the community of faith and future activity in the world.

By acting righteously according to the Spirit, Paul depicts believers as living in eschatological obedience to God. Later in the argument (Rom 8:14), he describes the children of God as ‘led by the Spirit’, indicating the Spirit’s role in actualising God’s rule in their midst.⁷⁴ The Spirit guides believers in their fulfilling in the law. God would be the ruler in their midst, as through the presence of the Spirit they experienced the gift of God’s grace.

Believers were to assume a form of life appropriate to the true people of God in the end-days. By connecting life in the Spirit with the fulfilments of the ‘law’, Paul strengthened the sense that obedience to the Spirit fulfils the requirements of social and religious life, over obedience to the ‘flesh’.

Having described life in the flesh and life in the Spirit, Paul focuses on the identity of those who live in the Spirit (Rom 8:9-17). Paul presents a strongly Christocentric reading of the Spirit, strikingly equating the ‘Spirit of God’ with the ‘Spirit of Christ’ (8:9b). In so doing, Paul adds further precision to his view of the Spirit. As Dunn puts it, ‘Paul’s definition... gave the conception of the Spirit a sharpness and clarity which it had been lacking.’⁷⁵ Participation in Christ (expressed unusually with the

⁷³ The similarities between Romans 8:1-17 and Galatians 5:16-26; 6:8 far outweigh the differences. Parallels between the texts include the Spirit-flesh contrast (Gal 5:16-17), the language of being ‘led’ by the Spirit (Rom 8:14; Gal 5:18b), the connection/comparison between the law and the Spirit (Rom 8:2-4; Gal 5:18b), and the reference to death to sin in Rom 8:10 and Gal 5:24.

⁷⁴ Whereas in 8:5-6, the Spirit is not so much an agent as an environment, in 8:14 the Spirit is described as leading the children of God.

⁷⁵ Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 433.

language of Christ 'ἐν ὑμῖν', rather than with believers 'ἐν Χριστῷ') means the presence of the Spirit makes one alive to righteousness (Rom 8:10). As well as enabling believers to act righteously, the Spirit (who raised Christ from the dead) assures believers that they too will experience resurrection (Rom 8:11).

The activity of the Spirit in creating community, and so defining it, also surfaces in Romans 8:12-17. Paul picks up the earlier contrast between flesh and the Spirit (8:12-13) to argue that those who are led by the Spirit are the children of God (8:14). Romans 8:15-17 reveals the process in which the Spirit identifies the community as the children of God; the Spirit who leads is also the 'Spirit of adoption'. By calling out 'Abba, Father', the Spirit testifies to believers that they are really God's children. As God's children, believers are heirs with Christ. To be a child of God means to follow Christ in suffering, in trust that God will raise believers (8:17). In Romans 8:18-25, Paul deals with the theme of suffering.⁷⁶ Suffering is put into perspective when contrasted with God's future activity in transforming creation (8:19-21). In the meantime, the Spirit sustains believers who await in hope their redemption (8:22-25). The existence of the church as a suffering community is indicative of its participation in the present, passing age but also of its participation in the coming age, in which suffering would be surpassed by glorification. Finally, Romans 8:26-27 notes how the Spirit assists believers in their weaknesses. The Spirit gives words when believers know not what to say, guiding believers because the Spirit knows the mind of God.

Keesmaat argues that Romans 8 draws on Exodus terminology in expressing the giving of the Spirit.⁷⁷ Specific terminology parallels Exodus language, including the mention of the Spirit 'leading' believers (Exod 15:13; Ps 104 LXX; Ps 77 LXX),⁷⁸ the use of 'Son of God' (Deut 32),⁷⁹ and the reference to release from slavery (Rom 8:15; Exod 6:6; 13:14).⁸⁰ For Keesmaat, the Exodus background functions as an

⁷⁶ Suffering is an important theme within Paul's letters, and an experience with which Paul was very familiar. As well as allusions to his suffering (1 Thess 1:6; 2:2; 3:4; 1 Cor 15:30-32; 2 Cor 1:8-11; 11:30-33), Paul's letters include four 'catalogues of suffering', found in the Corinthian correspondence (1 Cor 4:10-13; 2 Cor 4:8-12; 6:4-10; 11:23-29).

⁷⁷ Sylvia C. Keesmaat, *Paul and his story: (Re)Interpreting the Exodus Tradition* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 54-96, 136-143.

⁷⁸ Keesmaat, *Paul and His Story*, 55-59.

⁷⁹ Keesmaat, *Paul and His Story*, 60-65.

⁸⁰ Keesmaat, *Paul and His Story*, 66-68. Keesmaat also points out other allusions to the Exodus tradition, including release from fear and the cry to God as Abba (cf., Exod 5:7; Isa 63), *Paul*, 68-71.

integrative template for reading the text. Although she has employed an overly generalised definition of 'Exodus traditions',⁸¹ at least some of the texts Keesmaat points to in Romans echo the Exodus event, notably the language of 'leading' and the reference to release from slavery (slavery often echoing Jewish life under Egyptians). These allusions of the Exodus tradition strengthen the claim that Paul was advocating the creation of a new community in his discussion of the Spirit. Just as Moses led the children of God out of slavery in Egypt and into a new land, so the Spirit leads believers from slavery to fear (and existence in the old aeon) into new life.

In Romans 8, then, the Spirit creates a new eschatological existence in which believers participate. As Käsemann notes, 'The Spirit unites the community to the body of Christ and thus creates for itself spatially a field of earthly activity, a sphere of power which corresponds antithetically to the sphere of the rule of flesh or of the "letter."'⁸² The Spirit created a community in the present world in which God fulfilled his promises and acted as ruler over his people. By defining a separate 'people of God' in these terms, Paul nurtured the understanding of the community as representatives of God's future community. Although this did not imply a supersession of Israel, as Romans 9 – 11 clearly shows, it mapped out a space for believers distinct from Israel, and also distinct from a simple religious club.

The contrast between Spirit and flesh cultivated a more general theological (and social) exclusivity. Although insider-outsider rhetoric is common among sectarian groups, it functioned in Paul to characterise believers as God's eschatological people. Thus, the presence of the Spirit creates community gifts in the church and unites believers with one another around their devotion to Christ (1 Cor. 12:4-13). As Paul puts it, 'no one can say "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.' (1 Cor 12:3). The Spirit is an eschatological phenomenon, a pledge of what is to come (2 Cor 1:22; 5:5; Eph 1:13-14), but also an active power. Thus, believers who walk in the Spirit are distinguished from those who live according to the flesh (Rom 8:1-11; Gal 5:16-26). Paul's emphasis on God's new community could easily lead to the belief that the

⁸¹ Thus, Keesmaat includes material from the Psalms, the prophets (mainly Isaiah), and the Pentateuch as evidence for Paul's use of 'Exodus traditions'. Although the Psalms and prophets probably (re)employed the Exodus tradition in their writings, it is unclear that Paul alluded to the Exodus tradition through them or whether he simply echoed the general idea of salvation found within them. For Keesmaat's discussion of Exodus traditions throughout the Hebrew Bible and Jewish literature generally, see, *Paul and His Story*, 34-48.

⁸² Käsemann, *Romans*, 213.

ekklesia as primary community cancelled out the validity of all other communities. This inevitably raised the question of whether the community which submitted to God's direct rule could also submit to governing authorities.

Although Paul's perspective is apocalyptic, he draws on an eschatological theme from the Jewish scriptures which does not occur through much of the apocalyptic literature (the Spirit as a sign of the end-time). This tradition, however, is also drawn on at Qumran, an apocalyptic community. In Romans 8, Paul sees the Spirit as not only a sign of the end-time, but also as an active power within the Christian community. The Spirit works dynamically in the community of faith, empowering believers to obey God (in 'fulfilling' the law) and creating/defining an eschatological community of faith (the 'sons of God'). The themes are closely related; insofar as believers act according to the Spirit, so they are children of God. As believers 'in Christ', the children of God walk according to the Spirit. The Spirit leads the community in obedience to God, exercising God's sovereignty in the present, and creating a community which took precedence over the world.

Paul grafts the existence of the eschatological community onto the apocalyptic storyline. He therefore associates it with God's reign in the future, in which God would rule over his people. In Romans 8, the Spirit enables believers to follow God's will in their communities, raising the question of their obligation to communities without the Spirit.

The Eschatological Community of Peace (Romans 14:1-15:13)

As we saw in our earlier discussion, community paraenesis was a theme running through apocalyptic eschatology (*1 Enoch* 91:4b; 96; 103; *T. Levi* 19). In light of the imminence of the end, the apocalyptic writers exhorted their readers to live in anticipation of God's kingdom by faithfully following the law in their communities. Paul's perspective was similar to apocalyptic eschatology but differed on a fundamental issue. Rather than living in simple anticipation of the coming kingdom (although living in hope is also encouraged of the Christian community), Paul encouraged the Christians to live out the presence of the future within their communities.⁸³ God manifested his righteousness in Christ, so Paul looked back on

⁸³ The content of Paul's ethical admonitions also differed from apocalyptic eschatology, in which visionaries encouraged a radicalisation of obedience to the law. Paul's ethical perspective is an issue

that event in encouraging Christian communities to live by the Spirit. Alongside the hope of a future consummation when God would be all in all (1 Cor 15:28), Paul encouraged his communities to live eschatologically, to take seriously God's rule over the congregation and God's presence through the Spirit in their midst. As Beker puts it, Paul viewed the church as, 'the beachhead of the new creation and the sign of the new age in the old world that is "passing away" (1 Cor 7:29).'⁸⁴

Although Paul did not fully extend the revolutionary implications of such a perspective into the social structure of the church,⁸⁵ different areas of his theology and ethics reflect it.⁸⁶ One area in which Paul saw God's kingdom as partially realised was in the relationship between Jew and gentile. In Romans 14:1 – 15:13, Paul's instructions to the 'weak' and 'strong' to live in harmony with one another are connected to the claim that God was fulfilling his eschatological promises in the creation of a unified community of Jew and gentile under the Lord Jesus. The presence of the Spirit in leading and creating community, as established in Romans 8, is the basis for the development of eschatological life in the community depicted in Romans 14:1 – 15:13. Reconciliation between Jew and gentile was not only possible because of the *hope* that God would bring gentiles into the community of God, but because of *faith* that that God had already established his kingdom in the present together for Jews and gentiles.

The theme of peace between Jew and gentile was common in apocalyptic literature, and ultimately drawn from the Jewish prophets who proclaimed that God would bring gentiles into the midst of God's people.⁸⁷ The form that such peace took in the apocalyptic literature, however, was frequently expressed in terms of the destruction of gentile nations (Dan 7:27; *1 Enoch* 46:1-8; 62:1-63:13; 4 Ezra 13:33-

too complex to address here, but certainly his experience of the Christ-event (specifically his call to Christ) led to a reassessment of the significance of the law for believers.

⁸⁴ Beker, *Paul the Apostle*, 313.

⁸⁵ Beker, *Paul the Apostle*, 319-325.

⁸⁶ In some contexts, however, Paul also limits the significance of eschatological life.

⁸⁷ Isa 56:6-8. Cf., *1 Enoch* 90:30-33; *T. Levi* 14:4; 4 Ezra 6:26. Although some interpreters appeal to the 'ingathering' of the gentiles as evidence for Jewish mission, McKnight rightly (in my view) shows that such a conclusion does not follow. He helpfully, however, presents texts which include the notion of gentile participation in God's future kingdom. Scot McKnight, *A Light Among the Gentiles: Jewish Missionary Activity in the Second Temple Period* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 34-43.

38).⁸⁸ Although the judgment and subordination of gentiles is scarcely reconciliation for gentiles, it represented peace for Israel, which was the key issue. Israel would live in peace without fear of foreign nations.⁸⁹

Paul's understanding is orientated in a quite different direction, believing that Christ had raised gentiles to become co-heirs within God's kingdom.⁹⁰ Paul connects the resolution of conflict between Jew and gentile with the eschatological era. Although it moves in quite a different direction from the apocalypses, Paul's belief in Christ as reconciler of the communities was a solution to a conflict recognised throughout apocalyptic eschatology (the hostility of gentile nations to Jews).

The eschatological Lordship of Christ is central for the first section of Paul's argument in Romans 14:1 – 15:13, vss. 1-12.⁹¹ Through his death and resurrection, Christ is established as 'Lord of both the dead and the living' (Rom 14:8). As discussed previously, the mention of resurrection involved an association with the end-time era, the period on which resurrection-faith focused. Thus, the context and content of the Christ-event was eschatological. For Paul, the sovereignty of Jesus over the community collapses differences between its members, and particularly between Jews and gentiles. Paul appeals to the Lordship of Christ and the judgment seat of God in calling believers to renounce Lordship over each other by judging and condemning. Although the appeal to God's judgment seat involves a future referent, the significance of Christ as present Lord over the community reveals an eschatological context for Paul's exhortation to Jews and gentiles.

In Romans 14:13-23, Paul continues to renounce judging over one another and adds the positive exhortation to adopt an attitude of respect for others. Even if it means suspending one's own rights, believers should 'walk in love' and avoid offending the sensibilities of others 'in Christ' (14:13-16). The initial verse (14:13) may allude to

⁸⁸ We can understand this perspective on God's future dealings with gentiles when we remember that it was the gentile nations who often caused the suffering of Jews by ruling over them at the time many of the apocalypses were written.

⁸⁹ For a survey of both positive and negative attitudes of Jews to gentiles, see McKnight, *Light Among the Gentiles*, 1-29.

⁹⁰ Even for Paul, however, the salvation of gentiles was dependent upon, and subordinated to, the ultimate salvation of Israel (Rom 9-11).

⁹¹ For a closer discussion of Jesus' Lordship within this text, see chapter four.

Jesus tradition,⁹² but later in the text Paul explicitly supports his exhortation by relating the behaviour of believers to God's kingdom: 'For the kingdom of God is not a matter of food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit' (14:17).⁹³ Despite the frequency with which Jesus referred to the 'kingdom of God', Paul uses such language sparingly.⁹⁴ Although the 'kingdom' is typically used to refer to the future consummation, here the kingdom is referred to as a present reality. Paul relates the kingdom of God to the community of faith, arguing that life in the kingdom of God prohibits the judgmental attitude and actions of believers. Some interpreters argue that Paul is redefining what the kingdom means, specifically in removing its cosmic and universal implications.⁹⁵ However, such an inference does not follow. Paul is indicating that certain features of God's present reign have implications for community relationships, not that the 'righteousness and peace and joy' of God's kingdom were confined to the community. In relating the kingdom to the community, however, Paul suggests that in some senses it is present in and for the community. As with his discussion of the Spirit, Paul defines the believing community as the community of God in the present age.

In Romans 15:1-6, Paul turns to the example of Christ in supporting his call for the strong to respect the weak. Christ acted not for himself, but acted for others. Christ's demeanour is illustrated with a quotation from Psalm 68:10 (LXX), 'the insults of those who insult you have fallen on me' (Rom 15:3b). Paul relates the scriptures to the figure of Christ and, in a minor but significant digression, claims that the scriptures were written for the instruction of believers at the end of the ages (Rom 15:4). Such an affirmation is familiar from apocalyptic eschatology, where the 'meaning' of scripture is revealed for the visionary in the last days. The *peshet*

⁹² Thompson argues that in both parts of the verse Paul probably draws from Jesus tradition, though probably unconsciously for 14:13a, (cf., Matt 7:1/Luke 6:37a; Mark 9:42/Matt 18:6; Luke 17:2); *Clothed with Christ*, 163-184. Thompson also detects hints of Jesus tradition throughout the rest of the chapter, *Clothed with Christ*, 185-207.

⁹³ Thompson, drawing on the suggestion of Parunak, argues that a chiasmic structure is found in Rom 14:13b-21, with vss. 16-18 forming the central pivot, which indicates the centrality of the kingdom statement within Paul's argument. Thompson also argues that Paul's reference to the 'kingdom' recalls Jesus' own teaching on it (particularly regarding its present/future dimension), *Clothed with Christ*, 200-207.

⁹⁴ The 'kingdom of God' occurs in 1 Cor 4:20; 6:9, 10; 15:24, 50; Gal 5:21; 1 Thess 2:2; 2 Thess 1:5. In the Deutero-Paulines, it occurs in Eph 5:5; Col 1:13; 4:11; 2 Tim 4:1, 18.

⁹⁵ Baumgarten, for instance, stresses how Paul's use of (present) kingdom language is focused on the individual believer and related to ecclesiology; Baumgarten, *Paulus und die Apokalypik*, 89-91.

technique of Qumran illustrates how another apocalyptic community (re)interpreted scriptures as eschatological.⁹⁶ For the Qumran covenanters, the 'real' meaning of scripture was revealed by the teacher of righteousness and had eschatological referents. Paul and the early Christians, as a community of the last days, applied scriptures to their present experience and life as believers living *after* God's righteous activity in Christ. Thus, not only was peace characteristic of the redemption era, but Christ himself, as God's eschatological agent, had lived out such peace.

Romans 15:7-13, the final section of the text, explicitly draws on the eschatological tradition of reconciliation between Jews and gentiles in the kingdom of God and applies it to the present community. In fact, Paul notes that Christ became a 'servant of the circumcised on behalf of the truth of God in order that he might confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy' (15:8b-9a). The reference to Jesus as 'servant of the circumcised' functioned as an illustration that, just as Christ served the circumcised, believers are called to serve the weak as disciples of their Lord. The 'promises' Paul refers to are those that centre on the promise to Abraham, that 'all gentiles shall be blessed in you.' Paul focuses his attention on the promise of a unified people of God by including a pastiche of verses from the Septuagint which he sees as fulfilled in the present community. The passages relate primarily to God's action in drawing gentiles into God's people (Deut 32:43; Isa 11:10; Ps 17, 50; 117:1, LXX). The Christ-event was eschatological precisely in founding (through his death and resurrection) a *united* community of Jews and gentiles. The community of the Spirit is a fulfilment of God's promises.

Romans 14:1 – 15:13 illustrates that Paul's apocalyptic perspective grounded his view of the Christian community and his exhortations to it. Eschatology not only runs through this text, but also lies behind it. Paul viewed the community of Christ as a realization of God's eschatological promises. Believers not only looked forward to the establishment of God's kingdom, but experienced it within the community, raising the question of Christian obligations to the outside world.

⁹⁶ For the similarity between readings of the biblical text in Paul and at Qumran, see e.g., Donald Juel, *Messianic Exegesis: Christological Interpretation of the Old Testament in Early Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 45-57.

Hope for the Future

Although elements of realised eschatology are the most striking elements of apocalyptic eschatology in Romans, hope in God's future activity remains important. Like the apocalypses, however, Paul's depiction of the future in Romans is indicated by key terms and hints rather than substantive descriptions. The main references to the future within the letter reflect the disjunctive eschatology of apocalyptic but do not furnish a full explanation of the future events. Although Paul felt such reticence to be necessary,⁹⁷ modern interpreters are frequently tempted to reconstruct the 'Pauline eschatology' from the sporadic references found throughout his letters. However, as Kreitzer warns, such investigation, 'may prove to be a large and well-disguised cul-de-sac if we do not recognize the inherent limitations and variations of the eschatological forms, language, and ideas in which it is couched.'⁹⁸ Paul connects future hope to the community, but future hope is significant for the entire world as a public, revelatory event. Although Paul is reticent in describing details of the future era, clearly some indications are forthcoming. As in the apocalypses, Paul's hope in the future involved a disjunctive eschatology.

In Romans 8:18-24, Paul digresses from his main argument and deals with the pain of the present. The suffering of humanity is connected to the suffering of creation, and the subsequent redemption of both. The text contrasts the present sufferings with the glory to be revealed, including the creation in the redemptive activity of God. Adams limits the contrast between the present and future here by arguing that the attitude to creation (κτίσις) is much more positive than in 1 Corinthians (creation will be restored rather than replaced) and that the future glory emerges out of the present suffering, rather than dualistically contrasts with it.⁹⁹ As Adams admits, however, this perspective was also possible within apocalyptic eschatology. In this text, a contrast still remains; the present is a time of suffering, the future a time of glory; the children of God wait in the present with creation, while the future reveals and restores both; present creation is subject to futility, but in the future is liberated

⁹⁷ As Paul notes elsewhere, 'For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known.' (1 Cor 13:12). Elsewhere, Paul also expresses caution on pre-empting God's judgment.

⁹⁸ Kreitzer, *Jesus and God*, 148.

⁹⁹ Adams, *Constructing the World*, 174-184.

from decay. Although the creation is treated more positively than in 1 Corinthians, it restlessly awaits God's redemptive activity in the future.

Romans 11:25-32 also reflects Paul's disjunctive eschatology. An apocalyptic 'mystery' is revealed to Paul: following the entry of the 'full number of gentiles' into the kingdom, 'all Israel will be saved'. The 'mystery' is amazing, mysterious and an invitation to praise (11:33-36), precisely because it is an apocalyptic and unexpected act of God. This small apocalyptic scenario holds a central place in the letter because it undermines the gentile Christian arrogance which is Paul's target throughout the letter. Its presence shows that apocalyptic eschatology remains central for Paul's gospel.

Romans 13:11-14 also indicates the future horizons of Paul's gospel proclamation. Cranfield stresses that expectation of the end here is less important than what had taken place in Christ.¹⁰⁰ Nevertheless, the contrast between the day and the night draws on the disjunctive eschatology of apocalyptic. The horizons of Christian hope are beyond this world but function as an incentive for Christian behaviour in the present.

Elsewhere in Romans, shorter terms or concepts evoke the future horizon of God's salvation. In Romans 2, 'eternal life' is the reward for those who 'by patiently doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality' (Rom 2:7). A few verses later, the future referents of such attributes are indicated: there will be 'glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good' (Rom 2:10). Like the apocalypses, singular terms (glory, honour, peace) function as signposts to a greater form of existence than at presently shared. Indeed, these indicate participation in a God-type form of life. To God, 'glory and honor and immortality' supremely belong. Eternal life is a form of life in which God will be all in all (Rom 11:32; 1 Cor 15:28). Unlike in the apocalypses, however, the figure of Christ plays a central role in the future life.¹⁰¹ This is most evident in Paul's treatment of resurrection, where the resurrection of believers is dependent on Christ (Rom 6:5, 8).

Finally, the importance of hope within Paul's letter indicates the centrality of the future expectation (Rom 5:2; 8:20; Cf., 1 Cor 13:13; 1 Thess 1:3; 5:8). Hope

¹⁰⁰ Cranfield, *Romans II*, 682-684.

¹⁰¹ See Paul's treatment of the 'day of the Lord' throughout his letters, e.g., 1 Thess 5:1-10.

sustained believers in the present and encouraged them to live ethically, ‘clothed with Christ’. Whereas in the apocalypses, hope in God’s redemption was predicated on the revelation given to the visionary, for Paul, hope rested on the past Christ-event. A link occurs, connecting present and future. The content of the hope, however, shared the political scope of the apocalypses. In its disjunctive eschatology, Paul, like the visionaries, conceived the future world as radically different from the present. God’s rule would involve a transformation of a world in which believers suffered to one in which God would rule, being ‘all in all’.

Both present and future aspects of Paul’s apocalyptic eschatology, then, involved political elements. Political motifs could lead believers to see the eschatological community as independent of the state. Paul wrote Romans 13:1-7 to guard against such interpretations. Throughout the context, however, he also preserves a space for the eschatological community to pursue its own form of life. Before turning, finally, to a close analysis of that particular text, we will complete the chapter by noting how the theme of the eschatological community conflicted with the imperial *Pax Romana*.

Roman Imperial Ideology and the Pax Romana

Authors in antiquity praised the emperor for his establishment of peace throughout the ancient world (Suet. *Aug.* XXII; Hor. *Carm.* 14, 14-16).¹⁰² Ancient interpreters were quick to recognise the benefits brought by the imperial *Pax*: safe roads, the resolution of conflict between warring tribes, and a unified empire. Even early Christians acknowledged the benefits of Roman peace, and speculated that God sent Christ in such a fitting time so that the gospel might spread more easily.

The establishment of Roman peace, however, was not simply a matter of good imperial management. The *Pax Romana* relied on the maintenance of a large army and involved proclamation of the emperor as the herald and bringer of *Pax*. Imperial peace also assumed religious-political connotations beyond simply material benefits, taking ideological significance within the broader construct of Roman rule. The relationship of the goddess *Pax* to the Roman emperors reflects that *Pax Romana*

¹⁰² For the *Pax Romana*, see Stefan Weinstock, “Pax and the ‘Ara Pacis’,” *JRomS* 50 (1960), 44-58; George Woolf, “Roman Peace,” in *War and Society in the Roman World*, ed. John Rich and Graham Shipley, 171-194 (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), 171-194; Susan Silberberg-Peirce, “The Many Faces of the Pax Augusta: Images of War and Peace in Rome and Gallia Narbonensis,” *AH* 9, 3 (1986), 306-324.

was a religious ideology as well as a material benefit.¹⁰³ Although early Christians acknowledged the benefits of Roman peace, they protested at its ideological foundation in which the ‘peace’ of the emperors assumed a quasi-eschatological significance. Paul’s view of the Christian community subverted the Roman idea of *pax* by implying that real peace was found in the Christian community, and not in an imperially established one.¹⁰⁴ Although Paul did not mean by ‘peace’ the same thing as the Romans did, his perspective of eschatological life challenged the pervasive notion that all was well in the imperial world.

The notion of a nation at peace was, of course, established long before the Roman Empire. The celebration of *Pax* as a goddess dates as early as the fourth century BCE; and, in Rome, *Pax* became particularly, and understandably, important after the Social War.¹⁰⁵ Caesar established a precedent for Augustus in associating his rule with the goddess *Pax*.¹⁰⁶ Augustus brought peace to the Roman world, ending the troubled civil strife of the late Republic. In his *Res Gestae*, Augustus points to peace as one of the chief benefits of his reign. In particular, his victory over Spain and Gaul was celebrated with the altar to August Peace (12) and, during his rule, Augustus points out that the Temple of Janus was closed three times. Under Augustus, the *Pax Romana* became a central notion, summarising the new era brought by the empire. As Woolf notes, ‘as a symbol, it had the potential to be developed to meet the new conditions of empire.’¹⁰⁷ The peace of the empire was celebrated in literature, in monuments and coins, and in festivals and rituals.

In literature, the *Pax Romana* became a central part of the language associated with the emperor. References to imperial peace are often to the lack of war and conflict (Suet. *Aug.* 21). In other contexts, peace was associated with religious notions of Rome’s ruler (Verg. *Aen.* VI.852ff; *G.* I, 10, 69). Indeed, in many texts, Augustus is depicted as the bringer of peace to the whole world (Ov. *Fast.* 4.407; *Met.* 15,

¹⁰³ See below.

¹⁰⁴ For a discussion of early Christian assessments of Roman peace, see part two of Wengst, *Pax Romana*, 55-134. In his section of Paul, Wengst also looks at ways in which Paul’s announcement of peace conflicted with Roman peace, pp. 72-89.

¹⁰⁵ Weinstock, “Pax,” 44-46.

¹⁰⁶ Weinstock, “Pax,” 46-47.

¹⁰⁷ Woolf, “Roman Peace,” 177.

832).¹⁰⁸ The depiction of the emperor as peace-maker, sent and blessed by the gods, is reflected more prominently in the coins and monuments of the emperor. Coins with the legend *Pax Augusta* depict Augustus with the goddess *Pax*, who legitimates and supports his realm. Augustus' construction of the *Pax Augusta* in Rome established her as central for his reign. Buildings which expressed prosperity in Rome also testified to the importance of *Pax*.¹⁰⁹ Statues to *Pax* were also constructed throughout the empire. Further, festivals and rituals celebrated Augustus as peacemaker. The ritual of closing the shrine of Janus, and thus veiling the horrific figure inside, powerfully symbolised and represented Augustus' role as bringer of peace.¹¹⁰ Further, festivals were specifically held to honour Augustus as peacemaker.

Although the *Pax Romana* was established as a central component of Imperial ideology around Augustus, later emperors inherited its importance in their own ideology. In the late first century, Vespasian famously constructed a temple and forum of *Pax*. Nero, emperor at the time Paul wrote, particularly stressed that he, like Augustus, brought peace to the empire.¹¹¹

For Roman imperial ideology, peace did not simply signify cessation from war, but prosperity and harmony within the empire. *Pax Romana* was viewed as a civilizing influence, bringing *Humanitas* to the barbarians beyond the boundaries of the empire.¹¹² Despite the positive portrayal of the *Pax Romana* in Roman imperial ideology, it also had its dark underside. Silberberg-Peirce describes the 'two faces' of the *Pax Augusta* as involving peace and prosperity in Rome but subjection and conquest in the provinces.¹¹³ Thus, whereas in Rome monuments characteristically denoted the riches and harmony brought by Rome, monuments in the provinces typically depict Rome as a conqueror, subjecting foreign outsiders: 'The language of public imagery had two faces: one for the monuments in Rome and another for those in the provinces.'¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁸ Weinstock, "Pax," 47-50.

¹⁰⁹ Silberberg-Peirce, "Pax Augusta," 306-307.

¹¹⁰ Silberberg-Peirce, "Pax Augusta," 306.

¹¹¹ Weinstock, "Pax," 50-52.

¹¹² Woolf, "Roman Peace," 176-179.

¹¹³ Silberberg-Peirce, "Pax Augusta," 306-324. Silberberg-Peirce specifically compares monuments in Rome to those in the province of Gallia Narbonensis.

¹¹⁴ Silberberg-Peirce, "Many Faces," 309

The under-side of Roman peace is also represented in the startling speech placed by Tacitus in the mouth of the British chieftain Calgacus, in which Calgacus claims that Romans plunder, steal and harass and call it 'peace' (Tac. *Agr.* 30). Although Tacitus clearly includes the speech for literary effect, in view of the many instances of Romans exploitation of foreigners (particularly after battle), it no doubt reflects a historical view. There is also a certain irony in Josephus' record that war booty was stored in the temple of Peace (Jos. *J.W.* 7, 161).¹¹⁵ As Woolf notes, 'Within and without the empire, Roman peace may be seen as simply a component of wider patterns of violence, a concomitant of other structures of domination.'¹¹⁶

As gentile converts and residents of Rome, the believers Paul addresses in Romans would be well aware of the images of peace and prosperity surrounding them in the city. The contrast between Paul's idea of 'peace' and that of the surrounding society could hardly be greater, and it is likely that Paul expected an ideological clash between his gospel and the imperial ideology of the *Pax Romana*. Although it would be wrong to claim that a dark side is absent from Paul's view of eschatological peace,¹¹⁷ his construction of peace among Jews and gentiles, and his view of its eventual extension throughout the world, conflicted with Roman imperial ideology by claiming and re-defining the same 'space'. Specifically, Paul's Gospel included the claim that the world itself would experience future peace from God between Jew and gentile, and even between the creation and humanity. Roman imperial ideology claimed that the world *was* experiencing 'peace', a peace of the gods as well as material peace, under the Roman emperor. Paul's view of the community of Christ as the locus of God's sovereignty, and a realisation of eschatological peace, challenged the ideological hegemony of *Pax Romana* throughout the empire.

Conclusion

As well as viewing the outside world (chapter two) and Christ himself (chapter three) from the apocalyptic perspective, Paul interpreted the community of Christ in terms of its eschatology. By connecting future hope to the present, Paul depicted the community of believers as the locus of God's sovereignty in the present age. While

¹¹⁵ Warren Carter, *Matthew and Empire: Initial Explorations* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2001), 30-33.

¹¹⁶ Woolf, "Roman Peace," 171

¹¹⁷ Images of God's vengeful judgment are also present in Paul.

God would eventually be revealed as ruler over all, present followers of Christ experienced the rule of God in their midst through the Spirit (Rom 8:1-27). This manifestation of God's sovereignty was related by Paul to the community of the faithful. In particular, God's eschatological activity created a Jewish-gentile community united in praise of God (Rom 14:1-15:13).

Paul's vision of an eschatological community ruled by the Spirit conflicted with the proclamation of the *Pax Romana*. Although ready to endorse the positive benefits of imperial life, Paul's apocalyptic gospel implicitly critiqued the religious and quasi-eschatological claims of Roman peace. For Paul, the eschatological people of God in Christ had precedence over outside communities. The conflict between Paul's eschatological view of the community and the *Pax Romana*, even if less overt than in the apocalypses of the Roman era, raised the question of how exactly believers were to deal with an authority unrelated to the Spirit of Christ. Along with other political motifs in Romans, the theme of the eschatological community led Paul explicitly to address the issue of state authority in Romans 13:1-7.

CHAPTER SIX: THE CONTEXT, OCCASION AND FUNCTION OF ROMANS 13:1-7

Paul's apocalyptic exposition of the Gospel event in Romans involved themes which conflicted with Roman imperial ideology, themes that were implicit in his discussion of judgment and sin, Christ as eschatological-redeemer, and the community of the end-time. In light of these political motifs, Romans 13:1-7 may appear, initially at least, as somewhat of an intrusion in the letter. The 'political' themes of Romans, however, are precisely why Paul addressed the issue of believers and state authorities within Romans 13:1-7. Paul wrote this text to encourage believers in Rome, the capital of the empire and its ideology, to preserve a space for obedience to governing authorities, in light of the possible 'anti-state' implications drawn from Paul's apocalyptically-framed Gospel. The conflict between Paul's gospel and Roman imperial ideology, then, provided the occasion for Romans 13:1-7. But the meaning of the text is broader than this. As well as instructing Christians on obedience to the pagan rulers of Rome, the context within which it is placed implicitly qualifies its authority. The apocalyptic framework of Paul's Gospel and ethics leads Paul to set Christian praxis in contrast to the role and authority of Roman rulers.

Historically, Romans 13:1-7 fits within a postexilic Jewish tradition which acknowledged that authorities were established by God (Prov. 8:15-16; *Wis.* 6:1-11). It is also the earliest Christian text explicitly to address the issue of believers and the empire. In line with similar Pauline and New Testament exhortations elsewhere (1 Cor 14:33-36; 1 Pet 2:13-17), the text reveals a heavily subordinationist ethic. The context of Paul's exhortation, however, suggests that Paul was not advocating a simple endorsement of the state. The three apocalyptic motifs discussed throughout this thesis – judgment, the eschatological redeemer figure, and eschatological life – are found in the broader context of Romans 13:1-7 and qualify Paul's exhortation. Romans 13:1-7 reveals Paul's desire for believers to obey the Roman authorities but its context includes the awareness that the community of God is called to be different than the community outside of it, including the state. Even if not fully resolved, Paul acknowledges the tension between the community of God and the state, a tension characteristic of eschatological life in Christ.

The Historical Context of Romans 13:1-7: Admonitions to Loyalty

Within the ancient world, Jews, Greeks and Romans produced texts calling for loyalty to rulers. Greeks and Romans advocated obedience to sovereigns on the basis of their divine appointment and gifts,¹ or by arguing philosophically for their rule.² Postexilic Jews, on the other hand, typically advocated subordination to foreign rule as an appropriate corollary to the recognition that God was sovereign (and so had established these foreign rulers). Paul's own instructions are closest to the Jewish traditions of subordination.³ Within early Christianity, Romans 13:1-7 is also the first in a long line of texts calling for loyalty to governing authorities as a duty for followers of Christ. Romans 13:1-7 can be situated within these two traditions.

The Jewish Context of Romans 13:1-7

Jews in the postexilic period, living predominantly under foreign rule, produced several texts acknowledging that God had established foreign rulers and which called for obedience to them.⁴ By advocating submission to foreign rulers, Jews attempted to safeguard their communities, discouraging those who would rebel against foreign rule. Foreign rulers typically allowed Jews to maintain and govern their own communities, so long as tribute was paid. The actions of Antiochus Epiphanes,⁵ attempting to enforce a hellenisation of Judaea, were a shocking exception to the general relationship of foreign rulers to Jews; but for most of Jewish postexilic

¹ As Fears notes, 'political reality was justified in terms of religious imagery'. Fears, "Theology of Victory," 740. As within Judaism, however, Greco-Roman critique of Roman rule also took place throughout the empire; See MacMullen, *Enemies of the Roman Order*.

² However, philosophical assessment of the state also allowed room for critique. On the state theory of Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero, see Zsifkovits, *Staatsgedanke*, 28-34. See also MacMullen, *Enemies of the Roman Order*, 46-94.

³ O'Neill and other scholars argue that Paul's words are closer to Greek and Roman traditions; O'Neill, *Romans*, 207-209 (O'Neill also argues the text is an interpolation). Jewish traditions, however, are more similar in their ethos and justification to Romans 13:1-7 than non-Jewish parallels. Jewish texts did, however, draw on broader cultural themes, so a sharp distinction between 'Jewish' and 'Hellenistic' is unwarranted.

⁴ For a discussion of Jewish traditions calling for loyalty to foreign rulers, Dibelius, "Rom und die Christen", 181-184; Friedrich, "Zur historischen Situation", 145-146; Walter E. Pilgrim, *Uneasy Neighbours: Church and State in the New Testament*, Overtures to Biblical Theology, ed. Walter Brueggemann et al. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), 22-24. For a broader assessment of Jewish attitudes towards foreign rule, see N. R. M. de Lange, "Jewish Attitudes to the Roman Empire," in *Imperialism in the Ancient World*, CCS, ed. P. D. A. Garnsey and C. R. Whittaker, 255-281 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978).

⁵ See Schürer, *History*, vol IV, 146-163.

history, self-rule within limits was the rule. Even under the Romans, Jews were left to rule their own communities until the mistakes of the Herodians led the Romans to impose direct rule over Judea. The call for recognition of foreign rulers throughout Jewish history, then, did not imply a concomitant lack of self-rule within the Jewish communities. Texts are found within the prophets and in Wisdom literature and, surprisingly, in apocalyptic literature which acknowledged rulers as established by God and/or called for subordination to them.

While not calling explicitly for subordination to foreign rulers, the postexilic prophets assured Jews that foreign rule over Israel was part of God's plan. The prophetic literature had always, of course, proclaimed that God's sovereignty was expressed through world history. The rise and fall of kings and kingdoms were seen as part of God's plan in rebuking and teaching his own people. The exilic and postexilic prophets applied this insight to assure Jewish communities that God was working out his plan in their midst. Thus, Deutero-Isaiah startlingly depicted the Persian Emperor Cyrus as God's 'anointed' for delivering his people (Isa 41:2; 44:28; 45:1-4, 13). God's calling of Cyrus, however, is for the sake of his people (45:4) and sits uneasily with the overt denunciations of idolatry throughout Deutero-Isaiah (40:18-23). Unlike idols, God brings down rulers (40:23). While Deutero-Isaiah comforted the Jewish community by proclaiming God's imminent deliverance, Jeremiah encouraged the community to live at peace while in exile, trusting that God would deliver in his good time. Jeremiah encourages the exiles to 'seek the welfare of the city' in prayer and actions (29:4-9). It is God himself who has sent the Jews into exile, and Jews are encouraged to make themselves at home in Babylon until God saw fit to deliver them.

The Wisdom tradition associates Wisdom herself with earthly sovereignty.⁶ The voice of Wisdom in Proverbs 8 (Prov 8:1-36) proclaims herself as present in kings and rulers (Prov 8:15-16). The verses are linked in a parallel form: Rulers who 'decree what is just' and nobles 'who govern rightly' are the beneficiaries of Wisdom. *Wisdom of Solomon* 6:1-11 explicitly addresses 'rulers' and 'judges of the earth' in one of the fullest texts on authorities in the Jewish tradition. God gives authority and power to rulers but such power also implies responsibility. Thus,

⁶ *Wisdom of Solomon* also, however, critiques aspects of pagan culture, such as idolatry (13:10-15:19). For its 'cultural antagonism' towards Greco-Roman culture, see Barclay, *Jews*, 181-191.

alongside the positive affirmation that it is God who gives rulers authority, goes the warning that rulers who are unjust will fall under God's judgment (6:4-5). In fact, those who have power are given greater responsibility, and are liable to greater judgment, than those without these attributes (6:6). Rulers can transgress and will be judged if they do so. Although both of these works are connected to the figure of Solomon, even claiming him as their author, the production of Proverbs and *Wisdom of Solomon* in the postexilic period makes it likely that they would also be applied to present foreign rulers over Israel.⁷ The Wisdom tradition claimed both that God had given rulers power and that rulers could abuse their power.

As well as material from the prophets and the Wisdom literature, apocalyptic writings included texts which acknowledged that foreign rulers were established by God. This is somewhat surprising in light of the political motifs of apocalyptic eschatology examined throughout this thesis, but such an acknowledgment did not necessarily entail subordination. Rather, it related to trust in God's sovereignty, central for the apocalyptists. Alongside the critique and denunciation of foreign rulers within the apocalyptic literature went the acknowledgment that God was in control in establishing these rulers in the first place.

Daniel combines an apocalyptic denunciation of foreign rulers with the notion that God has also established rulers. As we saw earlier, while chaps. 7-12 are more concretely 'apocalyptic', including many of the themes examined throughout this thesis, chs. 1-6 reckon with the possibility that godly existence under foreign rulers is possible. Thus, Daniel himself is raised by king Nebuchadnezzar to a position of honour in Babylon (1:2-7, 18-21). Daniel acts in the interests of the king and acknowledges that God, 'deposes kings and sets up kings' (Dan 2:21). Indeed, Daniel is faithful to the king as long as his obedience to the law is not jeopardised.

Whenever his obedience to God is threatened, however, Daniel faithfully follows God and refuses to violate the commandments (Dan 3, 6). Indeed, God's ability to rescue his faithful people leads foreigners to praise God (Dan 3:29; 6:26-27). The theme is that good Jews prosper under good kings. The apocalyptic motifs of critique of rulers emerge when bad kings arise at an eschatological time.⁸ Even though Daniel also renounces taking up arms (Dan 8:35), this is a far cry from full subordination to

⁷ For other Wisdom references to the authorities as appointed by God, see Sir. 10:4; 17:17.

⁸ Not the denunciation of kingdoms implied in Dan 2:31-45; 7:1-14.

foreign rulers, but rather relies on letting God be sovereign. God's enemies shall still be defeated (Dan 8:25). In the apocalyptic literature, rulers are not to be recognised as such because they are good and just, as in other Jewish literature, but because God will soon dispose them.

The call for recognition and subordination to foreign rulers in Judaism was a position necessary for survival in the post-exilic period. Accommodation to foreign rulers is expressed throughout late prophetic material and Wisdom literature, but is qualified in apocalyptic literature.⁹ The practice of the Jews in praying for foreign rulers and offering sacrifices on their behalf was also an expression of this same attitude. As Cohen notes, 'the basic political stance of the Jews of both the land of Israel and the diaspora was not rebellion but accommodation'.¹⁰ Alongside the attitude of accommodation went the recognition that leaders could abuse their power. For most of Jewish history, however, foreign rulers did not threaten the (religious and civil) rule by the Torah within the Jewish community. When foreign rule threatened Jewish obedience to the Torah, Jews were ready to work against foreign authorities and had clear precedents within their Scriptures to do so.

Early Christian Context

Romans 13:1-7 also fits within the context of early Christian reflection on state authority.¹¹ From the very beginning of the Jesus movement, followers of Christ felt it necessary to assuage the suspicion that they were 'anti-state'. Indeed, a common theme throughout the first three centuries of Christianity was that devotion to Christ did not imply any necessary disloyalty to the emperor. Amidst the acknowledgments of state authority, however, went the awareness that Christians ultimately acknowledged a Lord quite different from earthly lords.

⁹ Delling rightly chastises interpreters who argue that Rom 13:1-7 is simply a 'Lehngut' as assuming that there was a consistent Jewish view of living under foreign rulers, while, of course, negative as well as positive approaches existed; Gerhard Delling, *Römer 13, 1-7 innerhalb der Briefe des Neuen Testament* (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1962), 8-12. My argument has focused on Paul's inheritance of apocalyptic eschatology, which represents a strand of Jewish tradition which involved a predominantly negative assessment of foreign rulers.

¹⁰ Cohen, *Maccabees to the Mishnah*, 34

¹¹ For discussion of NT parallels to Rom 13:1-7, see Friedrich, "Zur historischen Situation," 134-135; Delling, *Römer 13*, 52-56.

A crucial text in early Christian reflection on the state was Jesus' famous saying, 'Render to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's'. The text occurs in Mark 12:13-17 and parallels (Matt 21:15-22; Luke 20:20-26).¹² Historically, Jesus' words have functioned as justification for the separation of a civil and religious sphere. Such an option, however, represents an anachronistic reading which fails to take account of the context of Jesus' words. Jesus' pronouncement occurs within a controversy story in which the Pharisees and Herodians (according to Mark and Matt; 'spies' sent by the chief priests according to Luke) attempt to trap Jesus. In each of the Synoptic versions, Jesus recognises the trap which his opponents seek to lay for him, and so responds accordingly. Thus, Jesus' words do not represent a detailed response to the complex issue of the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Rome, but rather a retort to the hypocrisy of his opponents. Jesus asks those who posed the question to produce a Roman coin. In so doing, he points out that their question is hypocritical, as already they have decided their answer to the question.¹³ Jesus' saying acts as a challenge by throwing back the question to the opponents. The question of what exactly belongs to God, and what to Caesar, is precisely what is at issue. Although Jesus' words do not provide a doctrine of the state, they provoked further Christian reflection on state authority and are part of the broader Christian response to questions of the community of God and governing authorities.

In the Deutero-Pauline texts, the theme of 'subordination' is important in the so-called 'house-hold codes.' Although not dealing with state authority, the structure of the exhortations is similar to Romans 13:1-7.¹⁴ Thus, Ephesians 5:21-6:9 deals with relationships between superiors and inferiors. The passage instructs wives to subordinate themselves to husbands (5:22-24), children to obey parents (6:1-3), and slaves to obey their masters (6:5-8). The passage begins with a call to mutual subordination (5:21), and throughout the author also instructs social superiors in their behaviour.¹⁵ He does, however, take a social hierarchy for granted. Colossians

¹² For discussions on this passage, see Pilgrim, *Uneasy Neighbours*, 64-72; Cassidy, *Christians and Roman Rule*, 19-36; Zsifkovits, *Staatsgedanke nach Paulus*, 46-49; Delling, *Römer 13*, 12-16. Pilgrim's and Cassidy's discussion is most helpful and closer to the discussion here.

¹³ Kee, "Imperial Cult," 120-122.

¹⁴ Delling, *Römer 13*, 44-52.

¹⁵ For Yoder, this adaptation of the household code by Paul distances it from Stoicism and lends the 'subordinate' person dignity; John H. Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus: Vicit Agnus Noster*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Carlisle, UK: The Paternoster Press, 1994), 174-190.

similarly contains a household code (3:18-4:1), with significant similarities to Ephesians. 1 Corinthians 14:33-36, a possible interpolation, is also similar in tone to Paul's instructions.

Within the Pastoral Epistles, later interpreters of the Pauline tradition continue the theme of subordination and respect for governing authorities. Titus 3:1 represents a fairly general exhortation, calling on believers to 'be subject to rulers and authorities'. The exhortation is presented as a 'reminder', showing that it was well known in the tradition. It is a succinct obligation which is part of a cluster of exhortations, along with doing good, avoiding quarrelling, showing courtesy etc. The concern with behaviour towards outsiders is part of the immediate context. In 1 Timothy 2:1ff., the encoded 'Paul' calls on believers to offer prayers and supplications for those in authority (2:1-2). The motive for offering such prayers is that 'we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity' (2:2b). Prayers for those in power (implying respect) reflected loyalty to rulers. 1 Timothy also connects such prayers and behaviour with mission, as God's desire is for all to be saved (2:4).

The closest New Testament parallel to Paul's instructions in Romans 13 is 1 Peter 2:13-17. Like Romans 13:1-7, 1 Peter calls believers to accept the authority of rulers (2:13; Rom 13:1, 5), defines the activity of these rulers as rewarding the good and punishing the evil (2:15; Rom 13:3-4), and instructs believers to 'Honour the emperor' (2:17; Rom 13:7). There are also significant differences. 1 Peter 2 uses more precise language to refer to rulers, as the 'emperor' or 'governors'. The text connects subordination to the perception of outsiders; by subordinating to authorities, believers 'silence the ignorance of the foolish' (2:15); and as well as calling for honour of the emperor, 1 Peter 2 calls the believer to 'honour everyone'. While in Romans 13:7 believers are called to 'fear' authorities, in 1 Peter 2:17 believers 'fear God'.¹⁶ Contextually, 1 Peter 2:13-17 fits neatly into the context of the letter. It is associated with the idea of acting honourably among gentiles, which is connected to mission (2:12). Further, it is one of a number of texts dealing generally with 'subordination'; the subordination of slaves to masters (2:18-25), and wives to

¹⁶ Although there are significant similarities between the two texts, the differences are such that it is unlikely that Romans 13 was a source for 1 Peter 2:13-17. Rather, both belong to a common tradition. See Paul J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter: A Commentary on First Peter*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 180-182. Achtemeier also emphasises the differences between the two texts.

husbands (3:1-6) follows instructions on rulers. 1 Peter exhorts subordination to the authorities while at the same time starkly distinguishing believers from outsiders (especially gentiles) throughout the letter; believers are 'exiles' (1:1-2, 17), called to reject their former lives (1:14) and live in holiness (1:15-16), they are described as a 'spiritual house', a 'holy priesthood', and a 'chosen race' (2:4, 9). Thus, the question of their relationship with those who are not part of this 'chosen' community is implicit. Such a question would also be raised in the midst of persecution in the community (4:1-6, 12-19; 5:1, 10). Persecution, whether from neighbours, or supported by governing authorities, raised the question of whether believers should be subject to outside rulers. Thus, while the author of 1 Peter exhorts believers, as servants of God, to 'live as free people', he qualifies their freedom by exhorting them to 'not use... freedom as a pretext for evil.' (2:16). As in Romans 13:1-7, 1 Peter's instructions on subordination are necessary in the light of aspects within the gospel proclamation which would suggest believers are free from it.

The early Christian parallels to Romans 13:1-7 suggest that, from the very beginning, followers of Christ grappled with their relationship to Roman rulers. Paul's instructions on believers and the empire is one early Christian attempt to address the question of how believers should respond to rulers. The literary context of Paul's instructions, however, is central for determining why Paul chose to include such paraenesis within his letter.

The Text of Romans 13:1-7: Verse Analysis

Before exploring the literary context of Romans 13:1-7, and its tensions with this text, the passage can be analysed as a single unit. Romans 13:1-7 is certainly distinct from its surroundings. Thematically, the text introduces a new thought into the section; subordination to governing authorities. It also differs from the surrounding paraenesis in its length. Whereas the surrounding exhortations are succinct and direct, in 13:1-7 Paul offers detailed grounds for his admonition to subordination (note the repeated 'γὰρ' in vss. 1, 3, 4). Further, whereas Paul's paraenesis in the surrounding texts are specifically Christian warrants, Romans 13:1-7 invokes notion of a broader appeal. The change of tone and theme of 13:1-7 is also indicated by the change from second to third person. Rather than a direct exhortation, the passage begins with the third person, 'ὑποτασσέσθω'.

Verse Outline

- 1a¹⁷ Πᾶσα ψυχὴ ἐξουσίαις ὑπερεχούσαις ὑποτασσέσθω
- 1b οὐ γὰρ ἔστιν ἐξουσία εἰ μὴ ὑπὸ θεοῦ,
- 1c αἱ δὲ οὖσαι ὑπὸ θεοῦ τεταγμέναι εἰσὶν
- 2a ὥστε ὁ ἀντιτασσόμενος τῇ ἐξουσίᾳ τῇ τοῦ θεοῦ διαταγῇ ἀνθέστηκεν
- 2b οἱ δὲ ἀνθεστηκότες ἑαυτοῖς κρίμα λήμψονται
- 3a οἱ γὰρ ἄρχοντες οὐκ εἰσὶν φόβος τῷ ἀγαθῷ ἔργῳ ἀλλὰ τῷ κακῷ
- 3b Θέλεις δὲ μὴ φοβεῖσθαι τὴν ἐξουσίαν
- 3c τὸ ἀγαθὸν ποιεῖ καὶ ἕξεις ἔπαινον ἐξ αὐτῆς
- 4a θεοῦ γὰρ διάκονός ἐστιν σοὶ εἰς τὸ ἀγαθόν
- 4b ἐὰν δὲ τὸ κακὸν ποιῇς φοβοῦ
- 4c οὐ γὰρ εἰκὴ τὴν μάχαιραν φορεῖ
- 4d θεοῦ γὰρ διάκονός ἐστιν ἑκδικὸς εἰς ὀργὴν τῷ τὸ κακὸν πράσσοντι
- 5a διὸ ἀνάγκη ὑποτάσσεσθαι
- 5b οὐ μόνον διὰ τὴν ὀργὴν ἀλλὰ καὶ διὰ τὴν συνείδησιν
- 6a διὰ τοῦτο γὰρ καὶ φόρους τελεῖτε
- 6b λειτουργοὶ γὰρ θεοῦ εἰσὶν εἰς αὐτὸ τοῦτο προσκαρτεροῦντες
- 7a ἀπόδοτε πᾶσιν τὰς ὀφειλάς
- 7b τῷ τὸν φόρον τὸν φόρον, τῷ τὸ τέλος τὸ τέλος
- 7c τῷ τὸν φόβον τὸν φόβον, τῷ τὴν τιμὴν τὴν τιμὴν

Text Structure

The structure of Romans 13:1-7 is fairly clear. Following his call for subordination – the theme of the text – Paul advances two grounds of support, with 13:5 acting as a summary. 13:6-7 illustrate and apply Paul's call for subordination with the example of taxes.

¹⁷ See below for discussion of the textual variant at Rom 13:1.

A. Text theme – Subordination to the Authorities (13:1a)

B. The authority as instituted by God (13:1b-2)

1. God has instituted the authority (13:1bc)

2. Judgment on those who oppose God's authority (13:2)

C. The authority as God's Servant (13:3-4)

1. Fear of the authorities (13:3a)

2. The authority as God's servant for good (13:3b-4a)

3. The authority as God's servant against evil (13:4b-d)

D. Summary (13:5).

E. Illustration (13:6)

F. Application (13:7)

Romans 13:1a

The verse outline above follows the reading for 13:1a found in the body of the Nestle-Aland text: 'πᾶσα ψυχὴ ἐξουσίαις ὑπερεχούσαις ὑποτασσέσθω'. A significant variant, however, offers an alternative reading: 'πάσαις ἐξουσίαις ὑπερεχούσαις ὑποτάσσεσθε'. In this reading, a second person imperative rather than a third person singular occurs, the phrase 'πᾶσα ψυχὴ' is absent, and 'πάσαις' qualifies 'ἐξουσίαις'. This second variant is more direct than the first, and its reference to 'all authorities' ('πάσαις ἐξουσίαις') adds a universal scope to Paul's exhortation. P46, along with several other Western witnesses (D, F, G...), supports this variant. Despite the early witnesses for this variant, it seems likely that it represents a scribal correction of the first variant. Metzger suggests that the less formal style of the former reading was perhaps adopted to drop the Hebraic idiom, 'πᾶσα ψυχὴ'.¹⁸ Further, the use of 'πάσαις' suggests that a scribe may have universalised Paul's instructions so that they became applicable to all authorities (perhaps ecclesial as well as civil) at all times. It is more likely that the text was universalised, and a Hebrew idiom dropped, than that a scribe dropped the universal

¹⁸ Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft/German Bible Society, 1994), 467.

reference and added such a peculiar idiom. Thus, the former variant represents a better reading.

The first phrase within the text, and the head to the section as a whole, calls for believers to act in obedience to Roman authorities. Paul addresses ‘every person’ (‘πᾶσα ψυχὴ’), but the address in a letter to followers of Christ makes it clear that believers are the target of his exhortation. He also introduces two key terms of the text; ‘ἐξουσίαι’ and ‘ὑποτασσέσθω’.

The term ‘ἐξουσίαι’ refers not to authority in the abstract but to holders of authority, that is, rulers or officials.¹⁹ The many officials and governors of Roman civic and provincial life are in view, as well as the emperor himself, who was the head of all authorities within the Roman world. Paul is not speaking abstractly of the ‘state’, but referring to its various functionaries.²⁰ As Botha puts it, ‘The focus of this sense is on the *persons* who exercise authority and not on the *right, domain* or *means* of authority.’²¹ This reading of the ‘authorities’ (as Roman officials) is supported by the description of the tasks given to the authorities: they ‘reward the good’ and ‘punish the evil’. Further, Paul describes them as ‘bearing the sword’ (13:4c), a reference to their judicial role in punishing criminals and rebels, and also as concerned with collecting taxes, whether direct (‘φόρος’) or indirect (‘τέλος’) (13:6-7). Nanos’ innovative suggestion that the authorities here are really Jewish synagogue officials cannot adequately explain the language Paul applies to them.²² As Strobel has pointed out, the language for the authorities here reflects governmental administrative language.²³

Several previous interpreters have combined this ‘mundane’ interpretation of ‘ἐξουσίαι’ with the view that the term has a double reference, and denotes heavenly entities as well as earthly officials.²⁴ Advocates of this position point to instances

¹⁹ Cf., BAGD, *exousia*, 277-279.

²⁰ Porter, “Romans 13:1-7,” 122-123.

²¹ Botha, *Subject*, 42.

²² Nanos, *Mystery of Romans*, 289-336.

²³ Strobel, “Verständnis,” 85-88.

²⁴ Cullmann, *The State in the New Testament* (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1957), 62-70. For an argument that such a reading of ‘exousiai’ can be taken for granted in antiquity, see Morrison, *Powers That Be*. See Cullmann’s Excursus for a discussion of previous interpreters who supported a double-reading of ‘ἐξουσίαι’, *State*, 95-114. Wright is also hesitant to exclude the ‘spiritual dimension’ from his reading; N. T. Wright, “The New Testament and the ‘state’,” *Themelios* 16, 1 (1990), 15.

when 'ἐξουσία' refers to spiritual entities (1 Cor 15:24, Eph 1:21; 6:12, 3:10; Col 2:10), and texts like 1 Corinthians 2:8 where a 'double referent' seems probable.

Cullmann ingeniously fits a 'double-reading' of 'ἐξουσία' into a common New Testament 'church-state' position, arguing that throughout the New Testament the spiritual-earthly governmental authorities are established by God but have also been subordinated under Christ (Col 1:16ff; Phil 2:10), although final subordination to Christ awaits the future (1 Cor 15:25; Heb 10:13). The powers behind authorities can also act in totalitarian ways, in which case they violate the authority God has given them. Thus, believers respond to the state (and the 'powers' behind it) depending on whether it fulfils its functions under God, subordinating to Christ, or rebels against God.

Clinton Morrison, rather than arguing for a distinctive New Testament position, maintains that a 'double-reading' of 'ἐξουσία' fits well into the ancient world, in which spiritual authorities were generally connected with earthly powers. He argues that 'there was a common Graeco-Roman concept of the State; its ruler was divinely appointed and related to a cosmic system of spiritual powers.'²⁵ Morrison disagrees, however, with Cullmann's reconstruction of the early Christian theology within which the 'authorities' functioned. For Morrison, the death of Christ did not *defeat* the powers but only *revealed* the relationship between Christ and the powers that had been hidden through the ages. Thus there is no 'Christological foundation' of the State; the 'ἐξουσία' have remained the same from the beginning. Their function is to preserve order and so allow the church to continue its mission in the world. Although 'for the sake of conscience' the Christian could be insubordinate, this is not directly in view in the passage.

Such a 'double-referent' of 'ἐξουσία' within Romans 13:1-7, however, is highly unlikely. Although it allows authors to avoid the difficulty of Paul's (seemingly) unqualified subordinationist stance, the interpretation is open to criticism on a number of grounds.²⁶ Paul clearly believed that spiritual powers existed (Rom 8:38; 1 Cor 10:20-21; Gal 4:8-9), but depicts Christ as the sole, heavenly ruler under God

²⁵ Morrison, *Powers That Be*, 99.

²⁶ For criticisms of this theory, see Cranfield, *Romans II*, 656-659. Strobel, "Verständnis", 68-79; Dellling, *Römer 13, 1-7*, 20-34; Lutz Pohle, *Christen und der Staat*, 95-99; Zsifkovits, *Staatsgedanke*, 57-65.

(Rom 8:31-39; 1 Cor 15:27; Phil 2:9-11).²⁷ It is unlikely, therefore, that he conceived of spiritual powers other than Christ as having sovereignty over believers. As Käsemann puts it, 'A heavenly rule with the help of angelic powers is unthinkable in Paul.'²⁸ Strobel has also shown that the language of the text fits neatly into the world of Hellenistic administration, and so it is unnecessary to introduce the idea of a 'spiritual level' here. Paul does not indicate that the authorities he refers to are in any sense 'spiritual' beings, or related to 'spiritual beings', aside from the legitimacy they are granted by God. To argue, as Morrison does, that the language blurred the distinction between human and divine agents is illegitimate. Even Walter Wink, who advocates a view of the 'powers' language in Paul strikingly similar to that of Cullmann, refuses to read a 'double reference' into Rom 13:1.²⁹

Paul qualifies 'ἐξουσίαι' with the participle 'ὑπερχούσας', reinforcing the notion that the rulers in view are those hierarchically above believers. Porter contends that Paul's qualification of 'ἐξουσίαι' with the participle implies that obedience is, 'to authorities who are superior in some sense qualitatively, or, specifically in this case, according to their justness.'³⁰ The function of the participle, however, is to reinforce the sense of hierarchy in 'ἐξουσίαι', and not to introduce a measure of authorities, such as their justness.

The second central term within Rom 13:1 is 'ὑποτάσσεσθαι', a word which reoccurs in 13:5a. The word is related etymologically to the vocabulary of the first few phrases, and the sense of 'order' underlies it.³¹ The word also occurs in the 'household codes' of the Deutero-Pauline letters (Eph 5:21-24; Col 3:18; cf., Titus 2:5), reflecting its frequent contextual use in the domain of social relationships. In the middle or passive voice, it refers to, 'either a compelled or a voluntary or willing submission of one's rights.'³² The distinction of a previous generation of exegetes

²⁷ Several Deutero-Pauline texts use "ἐξουσίαι" for angelic powers (Eph 1:21; 3:10; 6:12; Col 2:10), as does Paul in 1 Cor 15:24, but this is no argument that the term as such carries this meaning at all times.

²⁸ Käsemann, *Romans*, 353.

²⁹ Walter Wink, *Naming the Powers: The Language of Power in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 45-47. Wink does note, however, that Paul did believe in spiritual powers behind human rulers, but that this was not his focus here.

³⁰ Porter, "Romans 13:1-7," 124.

³¹ Merklein, "Sinn und Zweck," 244-245.

³² Porter, "Romans 13:1-7", 120. Cf., Luke 2:51; Jas 4:7; 1 Pet 2:13ff.

between ‘ὑποτάσσεσθαι’ (seen as negative and characteristically unPauline) and ‘ὑπακούειν’ (which, as Pauline, was often described as ‘free obedience’) is critiqued by Kittredge, who argues that both terms fall within the semantic field of obedience.³³ While semantically the term denotes general subordination, the context of Romans 13:1-7 reveals what Paul means by his imperative. As well as general respect for the authorities as God’s institution (13:1b-2a, 7c), subordination to the authorities means doing good and avoiding evil (13:3-4), as the state’s role as guardian of order ensures that this will be rewarded or punished. Practically, it also means paying both direct and indirect taxes (13:6a, 7b), a reference which functions as an application of Paul’s exhortation but not as its main point.

Romans 13:1b-2

Paul gives his readers a first reason for subordination to governing authorities in Romans 13:1b-2. In common with other Jewish texts, he connects the authority of rulers to God’s authority. Paul makes the point both negatively and positively: No authority exists except by God (13:1b), and authorities which exist have been established by God (13:1c). The implication of this is that those who resist authority resist what God has instituted (13:2a). Those who resist will receive their just judgment (13:2b). As we pointed out earlier, several words in this section are connected etymologically, sharing a stem in common: ‘τεταγμένοι’, ‘ἀντιτασσόμενος’ and ‘διαταγῇ’, all of which relate to Paul’s initial command of ‘ὑποτάσσεσθαι’.³⁴ It is likely that Paul was also aware of their semantic relationship; orders of the world require a response of subordination.³⁵ The concern for respect for order is primary here.³⁶

The implication Paul draws from this is that those who oppose the authorities oppose God’s institution, and so will be judged. Paul does not define the precise nature of the opposition to authorities, but uses two terms to express it, ‘ἀντιτασσόμενος’ and

³³ Cynthia Briggs Kittredge, *Community and Authority: The Rhetoric of Obedience in the Pauline Tradition* (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Trinity Press International, 1998), 37-52. Kittredge relies on Louw and Nida for her semantic understanding of these terms and discusses their occurrences through selected texts of Greek literature up to the time of Paul (including Josephus and Philo).

³⁴ Käsemann, *Romans*, 351.

³⁵ A point emphasised by Yoder, *Politics*, 204.

³⁶ Dellling, *Römer 13, 1-7*, 39-44.

‘ἀνθέστηκεν’. Both of these terms can include various forms of opposition, anything from general disapproval to rebellion.³⁷ Botha argues that the generality of the terms indicates ‘any form of opposition, psychological as well as in actual behavior’.³⁸ Opposition to the governing authorities is acting against God because it opposes God’s order (‘διαταγή’).³⁹

Paul warns believers that those who resist ‘receive judgment upon themselves’ (‘ἐαυτοῖς κρίμα λήμψονται’). Paul indicates with the dative that those who oppose God’s order will be judged by God. Whereas Paul refers within the text to the judgment by the authorities, at this stage Paul refers to divine, eschatological punishment.⁴⁰ God judges those who oppose his ordinance. The threat of judgment supports Paul’s admonition to submit to governing authorities.

Although for western secularised readers, the claim that authority comes from God is unfamiliar, it was common in antiquity. Paul’s claim, however, is significant in what it does not say as well as what it does. Like other Jewish postexilic writers, Paul grounded the authorities in the authority of God. Roman imperial ideology claimed a quasi-divine status in legitimating the Roman emperor; but for Paul, the foundation for the authorities of the rulers is not the status they claim for themselves, but derives solely from God. Believers are called to subordinate themselves to authorities not for their own sake but for God’s. As Jewett puts it, ‘Submission to the governmental authorities is... an expression of respect not for the authorities themselves but for the crucified deity who stands behind them.’⁴¹ God is the real sovereign of this text.⁴²

³⁷ The term ‘ἀντιτασσόμαι’, for instance, is found in a variety of NT contexts (always in the middle voice); in Romans 9:19, it refers to those Jews who resist God’s will; in Mt 5:29, Jesus calls for believers ‘not to resist’ evil. A number of references are used for opposition (often unsuccessful) to Christians (Luke 21:15; Acts 6:10; 13:8) and others for Paul (or a later author writing in Paul’s name) resisting those in the wrong (Gal 2:11; 2 Tim 3:8; 4:14). Finally, it occurs in contexts of ‘resisting’ spiritual authorities (Eph 5:13) or the devil (Jam 4:7; 1 Pet 5:9).

³⁸ Botha, *Subject*, 47.

³⁹ Strobel, drawing on Deissmann, argues that the term ‘διαταγή’ reflects administrative use; Strobel, “Verständnis,” 86. Friedrich, however, has critiqued Strobel’s contention, and demonstrated that ‘διαταγή’ has a broader use and only takes on more specific administrative/political senses later than Paul. Paul chooses a neutral term for ‘order’, not a necessarily administrative one; Friedrich “Situation”, 136-140.

⁴⁰ Merklein, “Sinn und Zweck,” 245-246.

⁴¹ Robert Jewett, “Response: Exegetical Support from Romans and other Letters,” in *Paul and Politics: Ekklesia, Israel, Imperium, Interpretation. Essays in Honor of Krister Stendahl*, ed. Richard A. Horsley, 58-71 (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Trinity Press International, 2000), 67.

Although the ‘qualification’ of imperial claims is not the main point of the passage, Paul connects the authority of emperors to their appointment by God, not to their own status or cosmic role. Further, the God who grants them legitimacy is the God of Jesus Christ. While Roman imperial ideology sees in itself the fulfilment of humanity’s hopes, Paul subordinates it to the God of Jesus Christ, and lends it a provisional legitimacy.

Romans 13:3-4

The second reason Paul gives for subordination to the authorities is that God has granted them authority to reward the good and punish the evil.⁴³ Thus, believers need not fear the authority because by avoiding evil they are those whom the authorities are instituted to protect. Romans 13:3a establishes the basic premise for this portion of the text: the authorities are not a fear to those who do good but to those who practise evil. The contrast between doing good and doing evil runs throughout the passage. In 13:3b-4a, Paul assures believers that those who do good need have no fear of the authorities but will actually receive praise from them. In 13:4, he warns believers that those who do evil need to fear the punishment of the governing authorities. Thus, Paul characterises the authorities as both a ‘servant of God to you for good’ and a ‘servant of God for wrath against the evil’.

The contrast between ‘doing good’ and ‘doing evil’ is fundamental to the text, and the authorities respond to both. For Paul, of course, ‘doing good’ and ‘doing evil’ were fundamental for the Christian community, and took on distinctive traits within that community. In light of the references to ‘good’ and ‘evil’ throughout the surrounding texts (12:2, 9, 17, 21), it is likely that the reference to ‘good’ and ‘evil’ here is to behaviour fit for the believing community.⁴⁴ In the context of this exhortation, ‘doing good’ and ‘doing evil’ also take on connotations of correct civil behaviour, acting in a way which respects the governing authority.⁴⁵ These two senses are not necessarily antithetical. Being good as believers involves a degree of overlap with living as good citizens.

⁴² Wengst, *Pax Romana*, 83.

⁴³ Thus, the ‘ἄρ’ of 13:3a refers back to 13:1a, not to 13:2; Stein, “Romans 13:1-7,” 332-333; Merklein, “Sinn,” 246-247.

⁴⁴ Wilckens, *an der Römer III*, 35-37.

⁴⁵ Merklein, “Sinn und Zweck,” 246-248.

More difficult to understand is how authorities would 'praise' believers for 'doing good'. Cranfield argues that Paul uses 'praise' to refer generally to ways in which the authority, consciously or not, benefits believers.⁴⁶ Thus, the 'praise' of the authority comes ultimately from God, in working all things together for his purpose. Most interpreters, however, argue that Paul must have some specific idea in mind. Strobel suggests that Paul could be referring to the *laudation inicialis*, a kind of character reference made by authorities, though this may not have been in effect when Paul wrote. More likely is his suggestion that 'praise from the authority' refers to imperial edicts made to cities, which were directed to residents as well as officials.⁴⁷ By acting in Christian ways, but ways which also overlap with generally approved behaviour, believers contribute to the community which receives praise from God.

Winter has recently suggested that 'doing good' within the text refers quite specifically to public benefactions performed by believers (constructing buildings etc), and that 'praise from the authorities' refers to the imperial honour given to public benefactors.⁴⁸ Winter points to numerous inscriptions which use such language in referring to public benefactions. He supports his argument that this text refers to public benefactions by pointing out the 'absolute assurance' given by Paul in 13:3 (assuming that authorities would definitely praise the good) and the singular pronoun 'σοι' used within the text, indicating that Paul addresses rich individuals. Thus, by contributing to the 'welfare of the city',⁴⁹ believers 'do good' and receive praise from God. Although Winter has found convincing linguistic parallels for Paul's terms within texts and inscriptions dealing with civic benefaction, the reference does not seem likely in this particular context. Paul's exhortations have been concerned with general behaviour of all believers, and it is unlikely that he limits it to a few believers here. Winter's reading of 'doing good' breaks the contrast between 'doing good' and 'doing evil' within the text. If 'doing evil' is connected

⁴⁶ C.E. B. Cranfield, "Some Observations on Romans XIII. 1-7," *NTS*, 6 (1959-60): 245.

⁴⁷ Strobel, "Verständnis," 80-84; Cf., Merklein, "Sinn und Zweck," 247-248.

⁴⁸ Winter, *Seek the Welfare of the City*, 33-40.

⁴⁹ Winter's argument is part of a broader project to demonstrate that believers were much more positive towards civic life than as has been previously proposed. Thus, they sought to participate positively to civic life. Although some areas of his project are more convincing than others, his general argument moves in a quite different direction from this thesis. In my view, Winter fails to take fully into account apocalyptic eschatology and its political implications in considering early Christian views on civic life and the state.

with general disobedience, and is a possibility for all, then it is unlikely that ‘doing good’ is only possible for those few believers who are rich enough to act as civic benefactors.

It is also mistaken to infer that Paul’s use of the singular pronoun limits his exhortation to specific members of the congregation. Its use functions rhetorically to emphasise the importance of the particular admonition. Throughout Romans, Paul uses singular pronouns in addressing the congregation as a whole. Paying taxes and rendering honour are part of what ‘doing good’ involves.⁵⁰ Winter’s argument also assumes that believers in the congregation would have the means to create such benefactions. Although financially that may have been possible, it seems doubtful that a young congregation would engage in benefaction frequently enough for Paul to refer to it. Winter argues that authorities would only have cause to ‘give praise’ in response to some concrete act, but the suggestion of Strobel is equally valid and more plausible in the context. In short, Winter’s innovative proposal, while drawing on parallels for the language, is unconvincing in the literary and historical context of Romans 13:1-7.⁵¹

As a ‘servant of God for good’, the service of governing authorities is defined in terms of the general civic benefits it brings. Authorities act ‘for your good’. Although some interpreters read this phrase in terms explicitly of the good of believers, within the context it is best interpreted as referring generally to public welfare.⁵² The use of the term ‘servant’ is striking. While it has parallels with administrative language, it also has theological significance. As a ‘servant of God for wrath’, the authorities take on a role prohibited for believers and reserved for God in 12:19. Authorities, then, act unknowingly for God, anticipating the final judgment in punishing evildoers.⁵³

⁵⁰ i.e., 13:5-6, as illustrations and applications of Paul’s instructions, explicate part of what Paul means in this context. It is surprising, if Winter is correct in his interpretation of ‘doing good’, that Paul does not include concrete examples of this in these verses.

⁵¹ Towner suggests more helpfully that Paul is reworking cultural conventions of benefaction by making it a possibility for the whole congregation; Philip H. Towner, “Romans 13:1-7 and Paul’s Missiological Perspective: A Call to Political Quietism or Transformation?,” in *Romans and the People of God: Essays in Honor of Gordon D. Fee on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday*, ed. Sven K. Soderlund and N. T. Wright (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999), 164-168. A simpler explanation, however, is that ‘doing good’ is not talking about material benefaction at all but rather about behaviour in society consistent with loyalty to the Roman officials.

⁵² Merklein, “Sinn und Zweck,” 248

⁵³ Wilckens, *an der Römer III*, 34, 38.

Paul connects the sword to the authority of Roman officials in punishing evil. Some interpreters argue ‘μάχαιραν φορεῖ’ refers to the *ius gladii*, the right of capital judgment by the Emperor and governing officials.⁵⁴ However, the linguistic evidence supporting the use of this phrase for the legal right of capital punishment is inadequate.⁵⁵ Although it includes the idea of capital punishment,⁵⁶ the reference is a general one to the power of governing authorities to punish evildoers.⁵⁷

What is striking in Paul’s portrait of governing authorities here is the contrast between his description of governing authorities, as rewarding the good and punishing the evil, and the actual reality of Roman rule. Rome, as with many other societies, hardly fits this description, even if it was better than some of its predecessors. In light of Paul’s own suffering under Roman authorities, and in light of Christ’s own death under a Roman governor, it is difficult to read this text as a valid description.⁵⁸ Paul was also no doubt aware of the many injustices committed by Roman governors in the provinces as well as in Rome. Some interpreters have exploited the difference between Paul’s ideal here and the messy reality of many societies to give room for civil obedience.⁵⁹ After all, if authorities do not fulfil their role as guardians of the good and punishers of evil, then surely they fail in the tasks which God has given them. Paul’s own concern, however, was not to establish a definition of governing authority (which could then be used as a basis of critique) but rather to offer a *general* description of Roman rulers.⁶⁰ Paul’s assumption may be surprising and unrealistic, but the purpose of his description within this text is to give some basis for subordination to governing authorities. The authorities generally reward the good and punish the evil and Paul does not consider the response of believers to the situations in which rulers did not fulfil their role.

⁵⁴ Strobel, “Verständnis,” 88-89.

⁵⁵ Friedrich, “Situation,” 141-144.

⁵⁶ Yoder’s distinction between the symbolism of the sword and the use of the sword is overly pedantic. It seems driven by his hostility to ‘just war’ (an oxymoron, for Yoder) readings of the text than by the text itself; Yoder, *Politics*, 203-204.

⁵⁷ Cranfield, *Romans II*, 666-667. Friedrich, “Zur historischen Situation,” 144.

⁵⁸ Cassidy’s contrast of the ‘pre-prison’ Paul with the ‘imprisoned’ Paul minimises the extent to which Paul would already be aware of Roman misdeeds before imprisonment. Cassidy reads too much into Paul’s descriptions, which as a general one does not include the many exceptions. For his discussion of Rom 13:1-7, see Cassidy, *Paul in Chains*, 17-35.

⁵⁹ Porter, “Romans 13:1-7,” 118.

⁶⁰ See Yoder’s critique of the ‘normative understanding’ of the state; Yoder, *Politics*, 200-203.

Romans 13:5

In Romans 13:5, Paul succinctly summarises the grounds he has presented for his exhortation, repeating the key term ‘ὑποτάσσεσθαι’ from 13:1 (with ‘ἐξουσίαι’ implied). Paul refers to the two grounds for subordination he had discussed in 13:1a-2 and 13:3-4.⁶¹ Believers should subordinate themselves to the authorities because of wrath and because of conscience. Käsemann argues that Paul is not advancing two separate motivations but offering alternatives (Christian ‘conscientious’ obedience, or obedience because of fear),⁶² but the way in which this verse recalls the preceding themes shows that Paul is appealing to both themes.

The first reason for subordination alludes to the theme of punishment running throughout the previous verses. Believers are to subordinate ‘because of wrath’ (‘διὰ τὴν ὀργήν’). Those who are insubordinate will face ‘judgment’ (13:2b). Those who ‘do evil’ will face ‘wrath’ from the authorities (13:4d). The first reference to judgment, as we saw, was to God’s eschatological judgment (13:2b), but Romans 13:4d refers to the concrete acts of punishment by governing authorities. Even when the authorities act in ‘wrath’ against evil, they are agents of God. Here, then, the reference to wrath includes both earthly authorities and God, the ultimate judge. Believers should subordinate themselves to governing authorities, refusing to resist their authority, because in so doing they avoid judgment from God in the future and from authorities in the present.

Paul also calls believers to subordinate ‘because of conscience’ (‘διὰ τὴν συνείδησιν’). Although a term heavily influential among Stoics, early Christians also employed it. ‘Συνείδησιν’ refers generally to the ability to decide right from wrong in the context. Here, it summarises the theme running through the passage that rulers are established by God.⁶³ If believers are insubordinate, they will violate the testimony of their ‘consciences’ that God has established the authorities. At the same time, some interpreters have pointed out that ‘conscience’ allows leeway to disobey, if the conscience of believers shows that authorities are not acting in accordance with their tasks (rewarding good and punishing evil). Here, however, Paul clearly assumes that the ‘conscience’ will convince believers of the necessity of subordination.

⁶¹ Merklein, “Sinn und Zweck,” 249-250.

⁶² Käsemann, “Principles,” 213-214.

⁶³ Cranfield, *Romans II*, 668. Stein, “Argument,” 337-339.

Romans 13:6

Paul illustrates his call for subordination by referring to a practice current among the Roman Christians; by paying their taxes, believers already acknowledge that the authority acts for God, and that God is working out his purposes through the governing authorities. ‘φόρους’ here refers to direct taxes, the general tribute expected from people. Paul’s reference to the activity of believers in already paying their taxes, notwithstanding the imperatives of 13:7, make it less likely that the occasion for this text was a reluctance by believers to pay taxes (along with other Roman citizens).⁶⁴ Paul assumes that believers are already paying their taxes and uses this as an illustration that Roman officials have authority from God.⁶⁵

Paul refers to the officials as ‘λειτουργοὶ θεοῦ’, employing a term for ‘servant’ different than the earlier ‘διάκονός’. Here, the term is plural because Paul probably has the numerous tax agents in mind. Significantly, the word for servant had liturgical connotations. The related verb is used for service in the temple. Authorities are servants of God ‘working for this very issue’ (‘εἰς αὐτο τοῦτο προσκαρτεροῦντες’). This refers to the activity of collecting taxes, which as such is part of their role as servants of God.⁶⁶

Romans 13:7

Paul ends his exhortation with a general application, consistent with the imperatives of the earlier paraenesis. Paul asks believers to, ‘ἀπόδοτε πᾶσιν τὰς ὀφειλάς’. Although ‘ὀφειλή’ literally refers to a ‘debt’, it can take on the sense of ‘one’s due’. Thus, believers are encouraged to give to the authorities what is appropriate to their position or, more correctly, function. In four parallel phrases, Paul refers to what is owed. Two of the phrases are concrete ‘debts’, while two are more abstract attitudes. The first two are linguistically parallel to the last two, with the first word of each term echoing the other.

⁶⁴ Dunn argues that 13:6 is a climax of the passage and not simply an illustration, but this is driven by his argument that tax protests form part of the occasion of the text; Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, 766. As Dunn himself acknowledges, however, the ‘τελεῖτε’ here is an indicative. This verbal form, as well as the location in the text, makes it less likely that taxes were the main issue.

⁶⁵ Cranfield, *Romans II*, 668.

⁶⁶ Merklein, “Sinn und Zweck,” 251-252.

Paul refers firstly to direct (‘φόρον’) and indirect (‘τέλος’) taxes.⁶⁷ While the former were applicable to all residents within Rome, and throughout the empire, the latter applied only to those involved in trades which involved particular types of commerce. Paul also instructs believers to give to rulers both ‘fear’ and ‘honour’. Throughout this text, Paul refers to fear as something to be avoided, but here he uses it more generally to connote respect. Some interpreters suggest that while ‘honour’ (‘τιμὴν’) is given to authorities, Paul reserves ‘fear’ (‘φόβον’) for God, a difference suggested both in 1 Pet 2:17 and in the Jesus’ logion itself (Mark 12:17 and parallels).⁶⁸ However, such a reading of this verse breaks the parallelism. While it is true that Paul typically reserves ‘fear’ for God, the term was broad enough to include connotations of appropriate respect without necessarily the reverence reserved for God.⁶⁹ Such a reading makes best sense within this text, which is concerned fundamentally with obligations to the governing authorities, not with contrasting these obligations to those with God (although that is a tension which emerged from the context).⁷⁰

Some interpreters suggest that Paul echoes Jesus’ tradition here, pointing to the similarities between this text and the Jesus logion in Mark 12:17 (with parallels).⁷¹ Other interpreters are less convinced.⁷² There are, admittedly, numerous remnants of Jesus tradition throughout this text.⁷³ As well as the explicit appeal to Jesus’ example in 15:3-7, traditional sayings of Jesus lie behind several verses within 12:1 – 15:13. Paul’s call in 12:14, for example, is very close to the Gospel saying preserved in Matt 5:44/Luke 6:227-28.⁷⁴ The difference between Paul’s instructions in Romans 13:7 and Jesus’ words in Mark 12:17 (with parallels) make it less likely that Paul has

⁶⁷ As Strobel puts it, ‘Bekanntlich stehen beide Begriffe für die zwei grossen Kategorien der direkten und indirekten Steuern.’ Strobel, “Verständnis,” 88.

⁶⁸ Cranfield, “Observations,” 247-249; *Romans II*, 669-673; Wilckens, *an der Römer III*, 38.

⁶⁹ Within the LXX, ‘fear’ could be applied to rulers (Prov 7:1). Stein also points out that the parallelism of the text likens it to poetry, so Paul could take poetic license with the terms he uses; Stein, “Argument,” 324-323.

⁷⁰ Käsemann, *Romans*, 359; Merklein, “Sinn und Zweck,” 253-254; Delling, *Römer 13*, 12-20.

⁷¹ Cecil John Cadoux, *The Early Church and the World: A History of the Christian Attitude to the pagan Society and the State down to the Time of Constantinus* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1925), 108; Thompson, *Clothed with Christ*, 112-120; Yoder, *Politics*, 207.

⁷² Friedrich, “Zur historischen Situation,” 155-156.

⁷³ For a summary of Thompson’s position, see *Clothed*, 237-241.

⁷⁴ Thompson, *Clothed with Christ*, 96-105.

Jesus' saying in mind. Whereas Jesus separates what is given to the emperor from what is given to God, Paul's instructions concern the Roman authorities only.

In Romans 13:1-7, Paul encourages believers to subordinate themselves to Roman officials, appealing to the establishment of rulers by God and to the role of rulers in rewarding the good and punishing the evil. A corollary of such subordination is that believers should pay taxes. Although the text is startling in its seemingly unqualified endorsement of governing authorities, several interpreters have pointed out ways in which the passage provides grounds for critique. Some point to the apparent 'criteria' for rulers in 'praising good and punishing evil', but this is more a description than criterion for Paul. The subordination of authorities to God is more significant. Paul grounds the authority of Roman officials not in their own worth or status but in God's sovereignty.⁷⁵ Paul's intention, however, is not to discuss conditions in which believers might be insubordinate to state authority, but to exhort Roman believers in subordination to the Roman officials they encountered. Paul relies on traditional Jewish axioms to persuade believers in such a stance.

The Literary Context of Romans 13:1-7: Apocalyptic Eschatology in Context

Romans 13:1-7 is set within the broader paraenetic section of 12:1-15:13. Paul introduces a number of general ethical exhortations (12:1-13:14) before turning to a specific issue in the believing community (14:1-15:13). Paul's discussion in 12:1-13:14, however, is not simply concerned with correct belief and a moral lifestyle. Rather, Paul deals with the character of the new community of God, which he defines eschatologically. In connecting the behaviour of believers to God's eschatological activity, Paul's paraenesis in Romans 12:1 – 13:14, like in 14:1 – 15:13, involved a political scope which provided a cradle for his treatment of authorities in Romans 13:1-7. Paul grounded his description of the people of God in the apocalyptic Gospel of God's grace in Christ. The ethical paraenesis as a whole is underpinned by Paul's exposition of the Christ event in the first twelve chapters of Romans.⁷⁶ As Meeks points out, 'Paul's advice about behavior in the Christian

⁷⁵ Georgi represents an extreme in arguing that 13:1-7 represents a fragment of Jewish tradition from the republican period which implicitly, 'urges decentralization and undermined the ideology that supports the majesty of the state.' Georgi, *Theocracy*, 102.

⁷⁶ Note the 'οὖν' of 12:1.

groups cannot be rightly understood until we see that the great themes of chapters 1-11 here receive their denouement.⁷⁷ Thus, Romans 13:1-7 is not a 'political' passage unrelated to an 'apolitical' context but is surrounded by apocalyptic (and political) themes within the letter.

Romans 12:1-13:14 is introduced by Romans 12:1-2, which establishes the theme of the paraenetic section. Believers are called to offer themselves sacrificially to God, rejecting conformity to the world. In 12:3-8, Paul deals with gifts in the community of believers, which he follows with a series of general exhortations: Paul instructs believers in their relationship with others in Christ (12:9-13) and also addresses relationships with those outside of Christ (12:14-21). Despite the differences between Romans 13:1-7 and the collection of exhortations surrounding it, the passage on governing authorities is linked thematically with the preceding exhortations in dealing with those outside the community of faith (the 'governing authorities'). While believers are to pray and seek peace with their neighbours, they are called to subordinate themselves to governing authorities. In 13:8-10, Paul expresses the priority of the believing community as love, which fulfils the law. Finally, Romans 13:11-14 calls for believers to 'put on Christ' and live like Christ in light of the imminent eschatological consummation.

The section opens with an apocalyptic contrast between the life of believers and the world, in which Paul calls his readers to avoid conformity to this age (Rom 12:1-2). The reference to the 'world' is a typical device of apocalyptic writers in referring to 'this aeon', while the renewal of the mind represents renewal into the new era.⁷⁸ Paul appeals for believers to present themselves as 'living sacrifices' to God, which makes their worldly existence an offering to God. As Käsemann puts it, 'Sacred times and places are superseded by the eschatological public activity of those who at all times and in all places stand 'before the face of Christ'''.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Wayne A. Meeks, "Judgment and the Brother: Romans 14:1-15:13," in *Tradition and Interpretation in the New Testament: Essays in Honor of E. Earle Ellis on His 60th Birthday*, ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne with Otto Betz, 290-300 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1987), 290.

⁷⁸ Nygren, *Romans*, 418-420.

⁷⁹ Ernst Käsemann, "Worship and Everyday Life: A note on Romans 12," *New Testament Questions of Today*, NTL, ed. Alan Richardson et al., 188-195 (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1969), 191.

Both Matera and Thompson have shown that several of the terms and concepts in 12:1-2 contrast sharply with Romans 1:18-32, which appeals to the story of Adam.⁸⁰ Paul calls for believers to ‘present their bodies (τὰ σώματα ὑμῶν) as living sacrifices to God’ (12:1), while unbelievers dishonour their bodies (τὰ σώματα ὑμῶν) among themselves (1:24). Unbelievers worship and serve (ἐλάτρευσαν) created things (1:25), but Paul calls for Christians to offer themselves to God in reasonable worship (λατρείαν) (12:1). Unbelievers are given over to a ‘foolish mind’ (ἁδόκιμον νοῦν) by God to that which is not fit (1:28) but those whom God calls are to be transformed ‘in the newness of mind’ (ἀνακαινώσει τοῦ νοῦς) (12:2), to follow God’s will. As Thompson puts it, ‘[t]he action he calls for in 12:1-2... represents a reversal of the downward spiral depicted in Romans 1’.⁸¹ Paul’s contrast with the Adamic lifestyle suggests that the transformation in ‘the newness of mind’ is also transformation into the image of Christ, the model of the new age. This supposition is supported by 2 Corinthians 3:18, which contains the only other occurrence of ‘μεταμορφόω’ in Paul and connects it to Christ (cf., Phil 2:5). Within apocalyptic literature, ‘μεταμορφόω’ signalled the transformation which takes place at the resurrection (2 *Apoc. Bar.* 51:3, 5, 10; cf., 1 Cor 15:44f) and is used in the Gospels for Jesus’ transfiguration (Mark 9:2/Mt 17:2).⁸² Renewal in the ‘newness of mind’ occurs when believers live ‘in Christ’, which is the manner of living appropriate to the new era. By acting in this way, they increasingly learn God’s will for themselves. Believers are to assume the pattern of the new world in their present existence. Romans 12:1-2 sets the eschatological context for the following exhortations.

Paul also ends his exhortations with an appeal to God’s future eschatological activity. Romans 13:14-21 forms a neat inclusio to Romans 12:1-2. In Romans 13:11-14, Paul also contrasts the present time with the future: Believers live just as the night is drawing to a close. The contrast between day and night, light and darkness is common throughout the Hebrew Scriptures (Isa 2:5; Ps 43:3) and was used frequently at Qumran (1QS 1:9f; 3:13).⁸³ Paul uses the imagery here to refer to the

⁸⁰ Frank J. Matera, *New Testament Ethics: The Legacies of Jesus and Paul* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 194; Thompson, *Clothed with Christ*. 81-82.

⁸¹ Thompson, *Clothed with Christ*, 82.

⁸² Behm, *TDNT* IV (1967), 755-759.

⁸³ Cranfield, *Romans II*, 682ff.

old aeon (night/darkness) and the new (day/light). He appeals to the imminence of the end in calling believers to live ethically in this age (cf., 1 Thess 5:4-11). Verse 13 either refers to living honourably ‘as if’ the day had dawned or to living in the ‘new era’ as a present reality (although its consummation has yet to come).⁸⁴ In both cases, however, the present life of believers participates in God’s eschatological life. Paul’s use of the term ‘εὐσχημόνως’ suggests a conventional morality, which Paul contrasts with a list of commonly accepted vices.⁸⁵ However, living ‘honourably’ is also connected to ‘putting on Christ’ and living the kind of life described in 12:1ff. Regardless of their overlap with conventional moral axioms, Paul’s ethics are grounded in God’s eschatological work.

Although explicit appeals to apocalyptic eschatology are absent in Romans 12:3-13:10, the framework provided by these eschatological texts shows that Paul desires believers to participate in eschatological life, in life in Christ. The political implications of this apocalyptic setting for Paul’s ethics are not that the paraenesis itself is markedly different from the surrounding cultural context, although there are some differences, but rather that Paul sees the community of Christ as living out the new life, which raises the question of their obligations to other communities. The community of God is orientated to their new life in Christ throughout the passage.

In Romans 12:3-8, Paul appeals for unity in the community by drawing attention to their relationships with one another in Christ. Paul reminds believers that they are ‘one body’ to emphasise that although they are many, believers are united in Christ; ‘we, who are many, are one body in Christ (12:5). Paul also uses imagery of the community as one body in 1 Corinthians (10:17; 12:12-31),⁸⁶ but where Paul speaks of the ‘body of Christ’ in Corinthians, in Romans he speaks of ‘one body in Christ’, using the body as a metaphor for the community. The body imagery was also applied to the civic/political community (Epictetus *Discourses* 2.10.4-5).⁸⁷ In drawing on this body imagery, Paul depicts the community as the primary social unit for believers. As Dunn puts it, ‘The Christian assembly is a body, like the secular body politic, but

⁸⁴ For the former, see Barrett, *Romans*, 253-255; for the latter, see Cranfield, *Romans II*, 686-688.

⁸⁵ Adams, *Constructing the World*, 201-203.

⁸⁶ The imagery also occurs in Eph 4:4-16, but the author also adds that Christ is the ‘head’ of the body, which adds a new spin to the imagery.

⁸⁷ Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 550-551; Matera, *New Testament Ethics*, 195-196; John L. White, *Apostle of God*, 236-241.

it is different precisely because its distinctive and identifying feature is that it is the body of *Christ*.⁸⁸ Believers find their fullness in Christ, in a social network centred on him which challenges other activities and commitments.⁸⁹ Thus, the gifts given to the community, from prophecy to cheerfulness, build up the community (12:6-8).

Paul enumerates traits of community life which relate to relationships among one another in 12:9-13. The call to genuine love begins Paul's paraenesis (cf., 13:8-10). A cluster of exhortations are included which encourage believers to put each other's needs above their own, because in so doing they are 'serving the Lord'. The community is built up by prayer, hospitality and other such traits.

In Romans 12:14-21, Paul lists a variety of community exhortations relating to behaviour towards outsiders.⁹⁰ Yinger has presented the most recent challenge to this view of the text, arguing that Romans 12:14-21 continues the community focus of the 12:1-12.⁹¹ Yinger maintains that this interpretation allows a more integrated reading of the text, without the difficulty of forcing 12:15-16 into an 'outsider' interpretation. She also discusses Jewish texts which involve similar themes to Paul's paraenesis here and yet are addressed to those within their particular communities.⁹² Thus, Yinger argues that Paul's reference to 'persecution' and 'enemies' refers to conflict within the community, a conflict which Paul addresses more explicitly in 14:1-15:13.⁹³

While Yinger illustrates that similar language occurred in conflicts within Jewish communities, such does not seem to be the case here. Yinger maintains that there is no historical context for persecution of believers by outsiders, but the Claudius edict expelling Jewish believers a few years before Paul wrote this letter shows that the

⁸⁸ Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 551.

⁸⁹ Practically speaking, participation in the believing community would involve the dissolution of other social networks, which risked corruption in pagans rituals.

⁹⁰ So Cranfield, *Romans II*, 628-629; Stuhlmacher, *Romans*, 196-198; Friedrich, "Zur historischen Situation," 150-152; Th. C. de Kruijf, "The Literary Unity of Rom 12,16-13:8a: A Network of Inclusions," *Bijdragen* 48 (1987), 320-322.

⁹¹ Kent L. Yinger, "Romans 12:14-21 and Nonretaliation in Second Temple Judaism: Addressing Persecution within the Community," *CBQ* 60 (1998), 74-96. Some earlier interpreters also maintained this position; Matera, *New Testament Ethics*, 195-199.

⁹² Cf., CD 9:2-5; 2 *Enoch* 50:3-4; *T.Gad.* 6-7. Yinger, "Nonretaliation," 76-87.

⁹³ Yinger, "Nonretaliation," 87-94.

believers had suffered politically.⁹⁴ The later persecution of the community by Nero presupposes a prehistory of popular hostility towards believers, which could accurately be described as ‘persecution’.⁹⁵ Further, if 12:14-21 refers to outsiders, this makes better sense of the transition to 13:1-7. Yinger correctly points out the difficulty of explaining 12:15-16, which seems to be addressed to relationships within the believing community and so apparently break the address to outsiders. However, vs. 15 can relate to relationships with outsiders as well as fellow believers and vs.16, although it deals with unity within the Christian community, treats the theme precisely because it allows the Christian community to be a witness to the world.⁹⁶ Dunn also notes that, ‘obligations to “insiders” and to “outsiders” cannot be neatly pigeonholed and kept distinct.’⁹⁷

Following Romans 13:1-7, which continues the theme of relationships to outsiders, Paul summarises Christian existence in his call to love (Rom 13:8-10). Paul refers to love as that ‘debt’ which can never be ‘paid’.⁹⁸ Love of the other is an ongoing commitment.⁹⁹ The reference to the fulfilment of the law alludes to the idea of God empowering believers eschatologically. The will of God, expressed in the law, is fulfilled in love, and not in ‘works of the law’.¹⁰⁰ Jewett suggests that the anathous use of ‘νόμος’ includes Roman law and any other kind of law as well,¹⁰¹ but Paul’s primary reference is to the Jewish law, as reflected in his quotations from the Decalogue. The Torah embraced civic life as well as the life of piety. By fulfilling the law, believers exist as a community of God in the new age. Their obedience to the law (as love) defines their *community* life, not just their *individual* piety.

⁹⁴ See chap. 2.

⁹⁵ Dunn notes, ‘Paul takes it for granted that persecution and acts of malice would be directed against the small house churches of Rome,’ *Theology of Paul*, 674.

⁹⁶ See Cranfield, *Romans II*, 641-645; Stuhlmacher, *Romans*, 197. Yinger dismisses these attempts at ‘intergrating’ these verses as unconvincing, but Paul frequently digresses on topics.

⁹⁷ Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 678.

⁹⁸ ‘ἐὶ μὴ’ is best translated ‘except’; So Cranfield, *Romans II*, 674; Robert Jewett, “Are there Allusions to the Love Feast in Romans 13:8-10?” *Common Life in the Early Church: Essays Honoring Graydon F. Snyder*, ed. Julian V. Hills (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Trinity Press International, 1998), 269-270; Contra Barrett, *Romans*, 249-250 (who prefers the translation ‘but’).

⁹⁹ Nygren, *Romans*, 432.

¹⁰⁰ Stuhlmacher, *Romans*, 210-211.

¹⁰¹ Jewett, “Allusions,” 273.

Although the main theme of this passage is the eschatological character of the community of God, the other themes identified throughout this thesis occur. In 12:19, Paul calls for believers to renounce vengeance in light of God's future, eschatological judgment. Paul quotes from Deuteronomy 32:35a, connecting God's wrath with the future. Believers renounce vengeance in the present because God will 'repay' evildoers in the future. By renouncing vengeance, followers of Christ will overcome evil with good (12:21).¹⁰² Paul also connects God's eschatological wrath to the governing authorities in 13:4. The proximity of this text to 12:19 makes it likely that Paul is associating the behaviour of authorities with God's eschatological activity (cf., 13:2, 5). Just as Deutero-Isaiah regarded Cyrus as an agent of God's deliverance (Isa 45:1-4), Paul sees Roman officials as agents of God's wrath. Although Paul does not appeal explicitly to Christ's eschatological agency in these chapters, orientation to Christ is central for the community in Romans 12:1-13:14. We mentioned a possible allusion to Christ as the goal of transformation in 12:1-2, and in the last verse of the section (13:14), Paul also instructs believers to 'put on the Lord Jesus Christ'. Jesus tradition is also central for these two chapters.¹⁰³ By clothing themselves in Christ, Paul expects believers to live a life similar to Christ (a life conditioned by eschatology).¹⁰⁴

Within the literary context of Romans 13:1-7, Paul draws on themes of apocalyptic eschatology. Romans 12:1-13:14 are framed by two texts which ground Paul's exhortations in God's eschatological activity. The exhortations themselves relate primarily to eschatological life as the people of God, but the themes of judgment and Christ as eschatological redeemer are also present. Paul's exhortations fractured the boundaries between the private and the public (=political), and so raised inevitable questions concerning the current 'political' order.¹⁰⁵ Because Romans 12:1-13:14 is connected to Paul's argument in Romans 1-11, the political motifs of apocalyptic

¹⁰² Interpreters disagree over whether Paul is grounding his renunciation of vengeance in the hope for the future condemnation of the opponents or in the hope for their salvation. A lot depends on the interpretation of Paul's quotation from Prov 25, where 'burning coals' could refer to 'shame' (Cranfield, *Romans II*, 646-648) or to future wrath (Krister Stendahl, "Hate, Non-Retaliation, and Love: 1QS x, 17-20 and Rom. 12:19-21," *HTR* 55 (1962), 343-355.)

¹⁰³ For a summary of Thompson's conclusions on Jesus tradition throughout 12:1-15:13, see Thompson, *Clothed with Christ*, 237-241.

¹⁰⁴ Thompson, *Clothed with Christ*, 149-158.

¹⁰⁵ As well as 'sacralising' the governing authorities in Rom 13:1-7 (a point emphasised by Dunn), Paul 'politicises' the community of Christ.

eschatology found throughout the letter form part of the literary background for Romans 13:1-7.

Apocalyptic Eschatology and the Occasion for Romans 13:1-7

The occasion for Romans 13:1-7 is found in the conflict between apocalyptic motifs in Romans and Roman imperial ideology. The three 'political' motifs found in the literary context of Romans 13:1-7 – judgment of the present, Christ as eschatological redeemer, and eschatological life – raised the possibility that believers would lead lives independent from the civic sphere, particularly in their critique of the grandiose claims made in Roman imperial ideology. Romans 13:1-7, then, is not a surprising break with the context, immediate or larger, but functions as Paul's thoughtful response to the tension between the claims of the Gospel and the governing authorities. Alternative suggestions for the occasion of Romans 13:1-7 were surveyed in the introductory chapter. This proposal takes seriously political features of both the historical and literary contexts of Romans 13:1-7.

At a historical level, the close connection between religion and politics in the ancient world provides a significant background for Paul's instructions in Romans 13:1-7. Although in modernity, religion and politics represent separate forms of life, the former concerned with belief and doctrine, the latter with regulating society, they were closely connected within antiquity.¹⁰⁶ Although there were religious movements and beliefs which were concerned solely with what we might today call 'religion', Judaism and early Christianity, its child, did not belong to them. Second Temple Judaism was not a belief but a way of life; and political and civic life was an important feature of that life. The Torah was intended as a guide for society and politics, as well as for piety. Many Jews hoped for a future in which they would rule the world under God, living under the Torah.¹⁰⁷ Paul and the early Christians inherited the Jewish tradition that involved God's rule over all of life. Equally important for this thesis is that Roman religion was civil religion. Romans believed they required divine assistance to rule successfully, so leaders at all levels within the

¹⁰⁶ For the connection of religion with the political as well as the domestic sphere, see the discussion in chapter two.

¹⁰⁷ Mendels notes, 'Every religious Jew who believed in the scriptures had nationalistic ideas.', Doron Mendels, *The Rise and Fall of Jewish Nationalism: Ethnicity in Ancient Palestine* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997), 3

republic and empire were expected to participate in its religious rituals. Magistrates typically acted as religious functionaries before taking on other civil responsibilities.¹⁰⁸ The Roman imperial ideology took this a step further by connecting the rule of emperors explicitly to the gods.

At a literary level, the importance of apocalyptic eschatology within Paul's theology and in Romans itself forms part of the context for Romans 13:1-7. Apocalyptic eschatology expressed resentment and critique of foreign rule. Paul explains the Christ-event in the framework of apocalyptic eschatology, which was a primary conduit in his inheritance of those political motifs that conflicted with Roman imperial ideology. Although Paul adapted apocalyptic eschatology to his own ends, the political dimensions of this ideology were connected to the gospel he expounds in Romans. These motifs appear throughout Romans, both in the immediate context of Romans 13:1-7 and in the broader context of the letter.

Eschatological Tension: the Life of Believers and the Role of the State

As well as providing the occasion for Romans 13:1-7, the context of Romans 13:1-7 qualifies Paul's instructions. Alongside his call for believers to obey governing authorities, Paul instructed the community of God to live in accordance with God's new age, both in relationships with one another and in relations to outsiders. Romans 13:1-7 fits uneasily within its context, reflecting Paul's awareness of the tension between gospel and empire. Paul's instructions in Romans 13:1-7 are in contrast to his explication of the Gospel in terms of apocalyptic eschatology. Paul did not seek to resolve this tension fully but rather offered pastoral advice to the Roman Christian community. Paul views the world as in chaos and sin, but acknowledges that the governing authorities serve order; he sees the authority of Jesus as primary for believers, but calls followers of Christ to honour authorities as appointed by God; and while he calls for a distinctive life in the community of Christ, he describes a different role and life for the Roman officials.

In Romans 13:1-7, Paul assumes that authorities preserve order, a role granted to them by God in fulfilling his plan for the world. Roman officials are 'appointed' by God to 'reward the good' and 'punish the evil', collecting taxes towards this end. Throughout Romans, however, Paul asserts that, 'all of humanity is under sin' (1:18

¹⁰⁸ MacMullen, *Paganism*, 43.

– 3:20), a sin so pervasive that even God’s law has been usurped (Rom 7:14-25). Paul does not describe the authorities as participants in this sin in Romans 13:1-7, but preserves a role for them apart from it. Such an assessment contrasts heavily with the usual schema of apocalyptic eschatology, whereby the rulers and governors are themselves given over to sin, acting as representatives of general depravity. Believers in Rome, those at least familiar with apocalyptic themes, may have assumed that Paul would also condemn rulers as participants within end-time sin. Paul, however, describes the authorities as acting in the best interests of believers. Although the world is characterised as sin, which threatens to condemn all of humanity, Roman officials are appointed by God to judge that sin and preserve the good until Christ comes.

As a unit, Romans 13:1-7 also lacks any Christological reference. Aside from a possible echo of Jesus tradition in 13:7, Paul does not appeal to Christ in calling for subordination to governing authorities, but to God. This contrasts with the centrality of Christ throughout the letter, and with the underlying Jesus tradition in 12:1-13:14. Rather than appealing to the example of Christ, Paul draws on the idea of God’s sovereignty in supporting his call for subordination. By not mentioning Christ in Romans 13:1-7, Paul avoids the question of how exactly Christ’s Lordship in the community of God relates to the sovereignty of Rome. Instead, Paul relies on conventional Jewish tradition connecting the authorities to God. The tension between text and context provides an avenue of critique towards the authorities, even though Paul does not exploit it.

The most significant contrast between Romans 13:1-7 and the surrounding paraeneis is found between the community of God and the civil authorities. The life of believers exists in tension with that of authorities because the community of God lives differently than Roman officials. While the authorities are allowed to act as God’s agents of wrath (13:4), believers are prohibited from exercising vengeance and called to leave room for God’s wrath (12:19-21). Further, while the authorities demand their ‘dues’ of taxes and honour (13:7), Paul calls believers to meet these dues so that they can focus on the primary Christian ‘due’ which is love (13:8-10). Paul assumes, then, a place and norm for the community of Christ which differs from that of civil officials.

The contrast between Romans 13:1-7 and its literary context, both immediate and whole, qualifies Paul’s call for subordination in this text. Paul softens the

insubordinationist implications of his own rhetoric in Romans 13:1-7, while, in the immediate context of this call for civil obedience, he allows and encourages the creation and preservation of an alternate community. In writing Romans 13:1-7, Paul's purpose was not simply to declare Christianity a non-political movement. Rather, it was to preserve a 'political' arena apart from believers. Paul assures believers that the authorities continue to have authority, despite his critique of the present world, his presentation of Christ, and his vision of the community of God.

Paul's purpose in Romans 13:1-7 is to preserve a space for obeying governing authorities in the lives of Christian communities, a space threatened by his own 'political' theology. Paul may not have logically demarcated the roles of the communities of Christ and those of governing authorities, but he *was* concerned that the church as primary community did not eradicate the need for considered loyalty to state authorities.

Conclusion

Paul's exhortation in Romans 13:1-7 is similar to postexilic Jewish calls for subordination to the ruling power. It is also one of the earliest Christian attempts to address the tension between the community of God and Roman authorities. Paul grounds his call for subordination to the governing authorities in the sovereignty of God (who has appointed the authorities) and in the role that God has given to the authorities, who reward good and punish evil. Paying taxes is an example and application of the attitude which believers should have towards authorities.

The immediate literary context of Romans 13:1-7 is found in Romans 12:1 – 13:14, which deals with eschatological life in the community of God. Paul's paraenesis, however, is also connected to his theology and recalls the apocalyptic themes developed within the letter. These political-apocalyptic themes, and their contrast with Roman imperial ideology, provide the occasion for Romans 13:1-7. Paul wrote Romans 13:1-7 in light of the presence of political motifs in a letter addressed to the centre of Roman imperial ideology.

As well as providing the occasion for Romans 13:1-7, the apocalyptic motifs throughout the immediate and broader context of Paul's exhortation qualify the text. Paul does not collapse the sovereignty of God and existence in the church into a sphere unrelated to politics but maintains the tension between the two, even while attempting to soften it. Although it does not fully resolve the tension between the

gospel and empire, Romans 13:1-7 instructs believers to treat Roman rulers as part of God's plan, at least while the old aeon continues.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION

Scholars have presented various suggestions for the occasion of Romans 13:1-7, some paying closer attention to its historical context and others focusing on the place of the text within Paul's letter. This thesis has attempted to take the political dimensions of both the historical and literary contexts into account. Paul's argument in Romans was framed in terms of apocalyptic eschatology, a world view that involved political as well as religious dimensions. Paul also addressed his letter to believers living in Rome, the social and symbolic centre of Roman imperial ideology. These two contexts created a tension between the gospel and the Roman Empire which provided the occasion for Paul's treatment of governing authorities in Romans 13. The literary context of Paul's instructions, however, also functioned as their qualification. Although Paul wrote Romans 13:1-7 to soften the possible insubordinationist implications of his own rhetoric, he allowed and encouraged in its immediate context the creation and preservation of an alternative community, maintaining the tension between the state and the community of God.

In this final chapter, I briefly summarise the argument of this thesis and suggest ways in which it contributes to current research. As well as dealing directly with the question of why Paul wrote Romans 13:1-7, I have argued that apocalyptic eschatology was a political (as well as a religious) phenomenon and that Paul's gospel involved political motifs. The thesis also raises further areas for future research, including the social dimensions of Paul's apocalyptic gospel and the extent and function of apocalyptic motifs in other areas of early Christianity.

Summary of the Thesis

Although interpreters have proposed a number of occasions for Romans 13:1-7, explaining why Paul wrote this call for subordination remains difficult. Paul's instructions in 13:1-7 seem theologically distant from the context. Paul does not mention Christ within the text, but rather draws on the traditional Jewish recognition that sovereigns have been established by God. He appears to offer little qualification of his call for subordination, but devotes a strident seven verses in justifying his claim that God has appointed authorities, and so they should be obeyed.

Rather than finding a solution to the question of occasion in a specific historical context (such as unrest over taxes, of Christian 'enthusiasm'), I have argued in this

thesis that the literary context of Paul's gospel announcement in Romans, and the historical context of Roman imperial ideology, provides the key for understanding why Paul wrote Romans 13:1-7. Specifically, the conflict between features of Paul's gospel and aspects of Roman imperial ideology created a tension between the gospel and empire which Paul addresses in Romans 13:1-7.

Chapter two discussed the political contexts of the letter to the Romans. These have particular significance for considering Romans 13:1-7 and so the chapter establishes the basis for the following discussion. Apocalyptic eschatology, involving a sharp distinction between the present age and God's future era, was a means by which disaffected Jews expressed ideological resistance to foreign rulers. A second political context is the city of Rome itself, and particularly its significance as the centre of imperial ideology. Whereas the imperial cult was a predominantly eastern phenomenon, imperial ideology was pervasive throughout the empire. Roman imperial ideology functioned as a cultural *lingua franca* which bound together residents of the Roman world. Within Rome, the early Christians also became liable to political suspicion as a new religious group, as they began to move away from the Jewish synagogues. Their adoption of apocalyptic motifs was a point of tension with their civic environment.

In chapters three to five, I focused on political aspects of the apocalyptic narrative adopted by Paul. Chapter three looked at Paul's idea of judgment and its connection with apocalyptic eschatology. The radicalism of Paul's notion of sin is drawn from an apocalyptic reading of the Christ event, whereby all of humanity is enslaved to sin. Paul's description of God's judgment, particularly his description of gentile sins, conflicted with Roman imperial ideology insofar as it included the imperial house within its scope. Chapter four argued that Paul's images of Christ are grounded in his belief that Christ is God's eschatological redeemer, heralding the arrival of the new era in which God reigns. Because Jesus is God's eschatological redeemer, Paul describes him as messiah, as sacrifice, as 'new man' and also as Lord. Paul's depiction of Jesus as eschatological redeemer conflicted with Roman imperial ideology, which pictured the emperor as the supreme saviour of the world. In chapter five, Paul's vision of the Christian community is discussed and connected with his belief that believers share in God's eschatological life. The Spirit is both the sign of the new life and the power that enables believers to live under God's sovereignty. The new life is actualised in community relationships whereby a united Jew-gentile

community testifies to God's end-time activity. In depicting the community as God's community, Paul's gospel undermined the *Pax Romana*. For Paul, only Christ brought eschatological peace.

Chapter six proposes that Romans 13:1-7 is a response to these political features of Paul's theology in Romans. Just as Paul was prompted to respond to the misunderstanding of the law in light of the Christ event (Rom 6:1), so also he anticipated the possibility of Christians questioning the validity of earthly government in light of his apocalyptic conditioned articulation of the gospel in Romans. Particularly in its confrontation with Roman imperial ideology, apocalyptic eschatology raised the possibility that believers would refuse to 'owe' the government of Rome anything. Apocalyptic eschatology surfaces within the immediate context of Romans 13:1-7, but this context is related to the broader themes of apocalyptic eschatology throughout his letter. Paul's response to the tension between the empire and the community of God is not solely simply to connect the public good with the state. Rather, he maintains an existence for the community of God alongside the state.

Contributions to Current Research

The primary contribution of this thesis, then, has been to argue that *the occasion for Romans 13:1-7 is found in the political motifs of Romans and their conflict with Roman imperial ideology*. The three political motifs found throughout Romans – apocalyptic judgment, Christ as eschatological redeemer, and eschatological life – were connected with the eschatological narrative of apocalyptic. Because they involved a political scope, these motifs conflicted with Roman imperial ideology. In light of these literary and historical contexts, the function of Romans 13:1-7 was to convince believers that the Christ-event, although articulated in apocalyptic terms, did not mean that believers should live without regard for Roman authorities.

I have also argued that *apocalyptic eschatology was a political as well as a religious phenomenon*. The 'political' dimension of apocalyptic has often been dismissed, but its strange symbols and even stranger worldview involved political notions related to its disjunctive eschatology. For apocalyptic eschatology, the orders of the world were a definite part of the old era which was soon to pass away. In the new era, God would exercise his sovereignty over his people and the world, whether alone or through a redemption figure. Although other Jewish texts include parallels to this

depiction of time, the stark contrast between present and future is characteristic of apocalyptic eschatology. Apocalyptic eschatology maintained that God would right wrongs in the future by ridding Israel of foreign rulers. The political aspect of apocalyptic has been relevant for this thesis because Paul's gospel inherited its political features through apocalyptic eschatology.

Thus, a further contribution of this thesis has been to demonstrate that *Paul's gospel involved political dimensions*. Whereas the tension between present and future within Paul's theology is a well-known theme among Pauline scholars, the tension between Paul's gospel and the imperial world has only recently received scholarly attention. Those scholars who argue for a 'political Paul', however, come from a variety of perspectives. I have located a political dimension in Paul, specifically in Romans, in Paul's inheritance of apocalyptic eschatology (which conflicted with Roman imperial ideology). The apocalyptic eschatological framework inherited by Paul means that political undercurrents informed the ideas he developed.

Approaches for the Future

This thesis also opens up avenues for future research. A consideration of the social implications of Paul's gospel, particularly in its apocalyptic dimensions, would provide collaboration or qualification of the conclusions in this thesis. A further area of research would involve a survey of apocalyptic motifs within early Christianity to investigate their political functions or echoes (or the lack of them).

The ideological dimensions of Paul's gospel, and its conflict with imperial ideology, have been the focus of this thesis. The social implications and embodiment of the apocalyptic motifs in Romans, however, invites further research.¹ How did the apocalyptic-political motifs within Romans function in the social lives of believers?

One example of how apocalyptic eschatology related to the social existence of followers of Christ is early Christian mission. Mission was a social corollary of the view that God was judging humanity and had established Christ as the eschatological redeemer for all. Paul believed that he was personally called to act as Christ's apostle to the gentiles (Rom 1:5; 15:20; Gal 1:15-16), but his emphasis on mission also

¹ Judge notes, 'Obviously if the New Testament groups saw themselves standing at the climax of the ages, and anticipated an imminent end, this must have profoundly affected their view of their obligation to society'; Judge, *Social Pattern*, 8.

related to Jewish eschatological motifs emphasising the gathering of Israel and conversion of the gentiles.² Even though Paul saw his own role as missionary to the gentiles, he also encouraged believers to live as Christ's witnesses. In a broad sense, believers engaged in mission as they followed the gospel.

Whether or not it was preceded by a Jewish mission,³ Christian mission combined exclusivism (*the gospel* for all) and universalism (*the gospel for all*) in a unique manner. Christians claimed that salvation was only available through Christ, and so those who accepted Christ had to renounce their old gods and beliefs. On the other hand, early Christians were universalistic in reaching across ethnic and cultural lines to all in society. Pagans did not propagate their religious truth to others as Christians did. In fact, the closest parallels to the early Christians missionaries were the itinerant philosophical teachers, who also sought to spread their 'truth' to others.⁴ By spreading an exclusivist gospel, Paul and other Christians offended outsiders. The hostility of the mob, incensed at the social intolerance of Christians and their rejection of paganism, frequently led Christians to come to the attention of the authorities. As Schäfke puts it, 'Der Eingriff der Behörden folgt immer erst dem Aufruhr der Menge'.⁵

This example of mission is only a suggestion of how apocalyptic eschatological motifs in early Christianity may have begun to impact the culture socially and take on political repercussions. It was only later, however, that this led to more overt

² Sanders, *Judaism*, 290-92.

³ Those who argue that early Christian mission was preceded by Jewish mission include Dieter Georgi *The Opponents of Paul in Second Corinthians*, SNTW, ed. John Riches, (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1987) and Feldman, *Jew and Gentile*. More persuasive, in my view, are those who argue that early Christian mission was in fact a new phenomenon, including Scot McKnight *Light Among the Gentiles*; Martin Goodman, "Jewish Proselytizing in the First Century," in *Jews among Pagans and Christians in the Roman Empire*, ed. Judith Lieu, John North, and Tessa Rajak (London: Routledge, 1992), 53-78; L.V. Rutgers, "Attitudes to Judaism in the Greco-Roman period: Reflections on Feldman's *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World*," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 85 (1995):361-95; reprinted in L. V. Rutgers, *The Hidden Heritage of Diaspora Judaism*, Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology, ed. Tj. Baarda, A. van der kooij and A. S. van der Woude (Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 1998), 199-234.) See also Feldman's response to Rutgers' work in, 'Reflections on Rutgers' "Attitudes to Judaism in the Greco-Roman Period",' *Jewish Quarterly Review* 86 (1995):153-69.

⁴ Meeks draws parallels between Christian groups and philosophic schools but also notes significant differences; Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 82-84.

⁵ Werner Schäfke, "Frühchristlicher Widerstand," 465. See her discussion on pp. 464-483. For examples, cf. Acts 13:50-14:7; 16:16-24; 17:5-9; 19:35-41.

confrontations between the gospel and the empire. Further research is needed in how apocalyptic motifs in the gospel related to *earliest* Christianity as a social movement.

A further avenue for future research is the relationship between apocalyptic motifs and the ‘political’ throughout early Christianity. Fiorenza, in an article looking at early Christian apocalyptic texts,⁶ suggests that a shift occurred in the function of apocalyptic in early Christianity, from a critical use to a conservative one. In some streams of early Christianity, apocalyptic imagery was utilised to construct an alternative reality over and against the persecutors, but in other streams, and typically at a later stage, it functioned paraenetically to enforce ‘right behaviour’ within the community.⁷ The contrast Fiorenza draws between these two ‘uses’ of apocalyptic is perhaps too stark: calling for believers to live ‘ethically’ can also imply a resistance to the outsider culture/rulers.⁸ Nevertheless, her article is a reminder that apocalyptic eschatology can change and adapt. Future research could investigate the extent to which apocalyptic eschatology maintained a political undercurrent within other Christian writings.

Conclusion

Romans 13:1-7 is not Paul’s ‘doctrine of the state’, or a definitive, timeless, ‘Christian’ prescription of how believers should relate to governing authorities. Ironically, what was originally intended as a qualification for political features within Romans has become a supposed codification of ‘Paul’s view on the state’. Within its literary and historical context, however, Romans 13:1-7 is Paul’s response to the tensions between the people of God and the governing authorities. It ensures that believers will accept a God-given place for civil authorities within the world.

Paul also, however, affirmed the validity of an authentic community life under God, in the power of the Spirit. Because he accepted the eschatological time-line of apocalyptic, his gospel broke down the division between sacrificial life and civic

⁶ Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, “The Phenomenon of Early Christian Apocalyptic: Some Reflections on Method,” in *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and the Near East: Proceedings of the International Colloquium on Apocalypticism. Uppsala, August 12-17, 1979*, ed. David Hellholm (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1982), 219-316.

⁷ Fiorenza, “Phenomenon of Early Christian Apocalyptic,” 311-314.

⁸ Many apocalyptic texts include paraenesis alongside denunciation of foreign rulers (and persecutors). Within early Christianity, Revelation is clearly addressed to a persecuted community but was also involved in instructing believers on how to live.

culture. Paul encouraged appropriate subordination to governing authorities, but his central message throughout Romans, and throughout his letters, is his call for believers to live as members of God's eschatological community. This community of God, clothed with Christ, acts under the banner of love of neighbour and lives in the light of future salvation.

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